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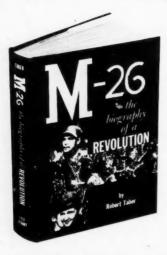
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"The beginnings of our conscience can be geographically located. It began in the German forests, and it gave its allegiance not to the intellect but to the will. Whether or not the severity of life in a hard climate raised the value of that persistence by which alone life could be preserved, the Germans as Tacitus knew them, and the Saxons as they landed in England, held as their chief virtue that willpower makes character. For craft or strategy they had no use; they were already a bulldog race; they liked fighting, and they liked best to settle the matter hand to hand. The admiration for brute force which naturally accompanied this ideal of self-reliance, drew with it as naturally a certain moral sanction. A man was as good as his word, and he was ready to back up his word with a blow. No German, Tacitus says, would enter into a treaty of public or private business without his sword in his hand. When this emphasis upon the will became a social emphasis, it gave the direction to ethical feeling. Honor lav in a man's integrity, in his willingness and ability to keep his word; therefore the man became more important than his word or deed. Words and deeds were then easily interpreted, not in terms of absolute good and evil, but in terms of the man behind them. The deeds of a bad man were bad: the deeds of a good man were good. Fielding wrote Tom Jones to show that a good man sometimes does a bad action, consciously or unconsciously, and a bad man sometimes does a good action, intentionally or unintentionally. From the fact that Tom Iones is still popularly supposed to be as wicked as it is coarse, we may judge that Fielding did not convert all his readers. Some progress certainly has been made; we do not insist that the more saintly of two surgeons shall operate on us for appendicitis. But as a race we seem as far as possible from realising that an action can intelligently be called good only if it contributes to a good end; that it is the moral obligation of an intelligent creature to find out as far as possible whether a given action leads to a good or a bad end; and that any system of ethics that excuses him from that obligation is vicious. If I give you poison, meaning to give you wholesome food, I have—to say the least—not done a good act; and unless I intend to throw overboard all pretence to intelligence, I must feel some responsibility for that trifling neglect to find out whether what I gave you was food or poison."

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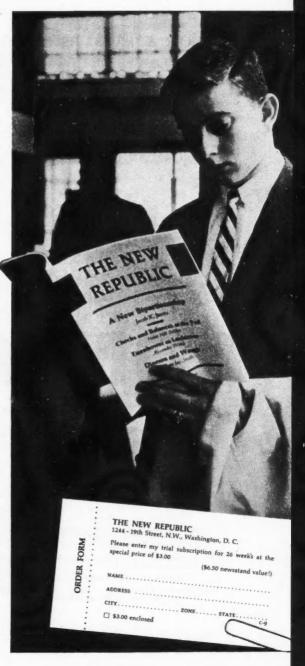
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# NON-FICTION

Roger Hagan	American Response to Change 7
Sidney Peterson	Is There a Metaphysician in the
	House? 41
C. Y. Lee	Chinese Opera and Its Origins 49
Nelson Algren	They're Hiding the Ham on the Pinball
· ·	King, or, Some Came Stumbling 101
Mark Linenthal	The Poetry of Frances Crary 129
Roy Bongartz	"Off the Rocker" and "On the Floor" 137
	FICTION
Nancy Packer	Oh Jerusalem 25
Brahna Trager	Chance and the Muse 65
John Berry	The Sibling 149
	THEATRE
Kenneth Dewey	One Take For A Bare Stage:
,	Mart of Addenda
	POETRY
Herbert Morris	The Destroyers 19
May Swenson	Riding the "A"
Rella Lossy	Rough Red Patio After a Big Lunch 39
C. E. Nelson	In Praise of the Season 112
Frances Crary	Eleven Poems
	GRAPHICS
Vicole Schoening	The San Francisco Chinese Opera-
0	A Portfolio 49
John Ihle	Five Etchings

William Goodman, 6; Keith Johnson, 26; Edward Rehmus, 40, 44, and 46; Arthur Okamura, 66-67; William Brice, 89; Strombotne, 100; Kett, 125: Julius Wasserstein, 138; Morris Broderson, 148. Cover design by Jerry Berman.



William Goodman

## AMERICAN RESPONSE TO CHANGE

VIEWED CRITICALLY, RECENT events and the way Americans have responded to them begin to show an ominous pattern. And as we look back over our history, it appears that the pattern is not new. It is only more visible now because recent changes in the balance of world power have aggravated it. But its elements are so familiar that it might be considered an integral part of what W.W. Rostow has called The American Style. (He would not agree.) Six characteristics strike me in particular, and I will present them starkly rather than judiciously. I know they are not the whole story, but every day's news gives evidence that they may become more important than all the qualifications one could make to them. They must be understood before that happens. In the conclusion I will say why I think these characteristics form a pattern.

Self-righteousness. This one is fairly obvious. We believe that we operate on principles, and that we always uphold principles while others violate them. Principle is always on our side. We refuse to talk turkey with suspected violators of principles, and even with allies if they appear to be playing a power game. During the war, FDR would not negotiate spheres of interest with Churchill and Stalin, and as a result we were presented at war's end with a fait accompli that the latter had privately agreed to. We preferred "vaguely magnificent" phrases about world order, promises of a second front (which our long subsequent delay in effecting made us appear dishonest), and principles of joint allied control of captured territory (which we were the

first to violate in Italy). Generally imagining ourselves in the lofty realm of principle, we refuse to deal with the world as it is. But the world goes on, and we find ourselves, as in this instance, having "lost the peace." (The idea that we might have "won" it is itself not very reassuring about our vision of peace.) A more recent instance is our incredibly pious certainty that Castro is evil and that we have done all we could to redeem him even while refusing to talk or negotiate with him.

Is this our much-trumpeted idealism? Idealism is not necessarily blinding: self-righteousness is. That is its function—to blind us to our own mixed motives, to pretend we have no responsibility to give up a few peripheral interests in negotiation, and to obscure the operations among us of cynical or insane men whose energies we find convenient, so as not to have to face how these men contradict our ideals and how we do so ourselves.

PUNITIVENESS. This goes hand in hand with self-righteousness. Our wars are seen as punitive expeditions, and many of us love war because it allows us to punish. Read the newspaper interviews with reservists called up after Kennedy's speech. War is never for gain or expediency. As George Kennan wrote in *American Diplomacy*, 1900-1950:

Whoever says there is a law must of course be indignant against the lawbreaker. And when such indignation spills over into military contest, it knows no bounds short of reduction of the lawbreaker to the point of complete submissiveness—namely, unconditional surrender. It is a curious thing, but the legalistic approach to world affairs, rooted as it unquestionably is in a desire to do away with war and violence, makes violence more enduring, more terrible, and more destructive to political stability than did the older motives of national self-interest.

Kennan is not referring to the mentality that upholds justice, but to the one that demands the right to punish. That is an important difference, even though the same man sometimes falls from one to the other, particularly under the pressure of mobilization and what that demands in our democracy. One remembers how quickly Wilson's idea of "Peace Without Victory" became a belief that autocratic governments must be destroyed; FDR's punitiveness towards Germany; the tateful decision, sometime in 1942, to bomb whole cities rather than just military and supply centers; the policy of unconditional sur-

render; the use of the atom bomb in Japan; the extremely popular bellicosity of Eisenhower and Kennedy towards Cuba; and on and on, whether we go backwards or forwards in history. The important point is that there can be no rational assessment of our goals in a conflict situation. Thought is frozen "for the duration."

Throughout our history, negotiation in such situations has been called "compromise" and that word has had the most opprobrious connotations. We must not "compromise ourselves." In a more benign age, when the art of debate still flourished and there were thus ways to maintain contact and give-and-take in times of conflict (at least within the Senate chamber), and when the contestants could hardly escape the fact that they had a linked destiny, there were indeed a series of compromises between North and South. But even then it only worked for a while. Negotiation has never been an established value in the United States; much more respected was a good fight or a good lawsuit, the "orderly way" to do the same thing-that is, make a purely unilateral gain without having to respect or consider the other fellow's claim. (Hopefully he ends up in jail or broke. Most lawsuits aim not at a reasonable restitution but at destroying the opponent.) In time of conflict, we rely on stubborness, "principle," "no negotiation with evil," etc. (For further evidence from recent foreign policy concerning the two characteristics above, I refer the reader to Staughton Lynd's article, "The Origins of the Cold War," in Commentary, November 1960.) Punishment is integral to our strategic doctrine. The Air Force has detailed strategies which involve punishing peripheral cities for a country's bad behavior without provoking its full-scale retaliation by upsetting the military balance. The assumption here is presumably that everybody should recognize the right to punish by killing mere people; what they should not be expected to put up with is an attack upon their weapons, their protective shell.

One has only to look at the daily paper to find domestic targets of punitiveness. The anxiety to pursue all suspected subversives and pacifists into jail, and the wierd, anachronistic vendetta against the Communist Party, demonstrate it only too well. They also show how important it is, in domestic punitiveness, to pick a weak target. Against weakness one can win and get his satisfaction. Furthermore, the weak are more despicable than the strong. American Communists are sad and dusty failures even at their own game, and we hate failures.

BEWILDERMENT. By this I refer not to momentary confusion, but to bewilderment as a continuing style. Many of our leaders have owed their popularity to their lack of intellect and their tendency to become bewildered. Even when we get a good man we like him better when he gets befuddled and reacts emotionally. I believe bewilderment was President Eisenhower's chief source of strength. There was something in his confused visage that told us that it was all right to understand as little as we did. He was a mood leader, and as such he was more effective after he lost the power of coherent speech than before. But there was more to it than the sanction he gave us for not thinking too hard about our problems and crises (don't worry about it, it's not that serious, go have a good round of golf). It was important to us because bewilderment is the appropriate response of the man who has done all he can, and still things go wrong. So it assures us that we are as good as we ought to be. When things go wrong, it is just inexplicable; or it is a mechanical failure; or it is machination from the outside-somebody out there is meddling. Lapses are not seen as organic, needing analysis and change of the way we do things. We renounce our lapses as a gentleman renounces his rage—that wasn't me. Badness, failure, social ills, greed, and corporate cheating are evil breaking through the crust from below somewhere, like Ike's temper. A fair if extreme example is the Southerner's conviction that the Negro sit-ins were Communist-inspired. It cannot be imagined that the American Negro might be doing this for his own reasons, or that, just possibly, the system he protests really stinks.

A wider-spread form of bewilderment is the feeling that things are too complex and must be left to the experts and tough-guys. Special measures are needed, everything is flying apart, hurry. This accounts for the temporary and uncertain appeal of the young, potent, somewhat machine-like style of the Kennedy brothers, who are operators par excellence. The trouble is, they weren't bewildered. The country liked them better after the Cuba fiasco, eagerly passing the blame along to advisors, Pentagon, CIA, everybody but the responsible official, but it was probably still reassuring to read that Eisenhower announced that he would continue to meet periodically with his former Cabinet to pass on matters of national policy. The old muddlers, we can rest assured, are still hovering in the near background, and Eisenhower's approval of Kennedy's acts is on the front pages whenever it is bestowed.

Bewilderment is a tragedy when it becomes a style because it represents the abdication of reason. Without analysis and self-criticism, a man or a people can go on in a dream world thinking everything is all right for just so long. When they find out how bad things have gotten, they despair, and they may want to die rather than face reality and make the needed adjustments.

CULTURAL MYTH-MAKING-THE MYTH OF A PURE PAST. The previous point becomes clearer here, because this represents a denial of insights that may be crowding in upon us. Look through any high school or junior college text on American history and see if it gives any sense that the American past is filled with battles over moral questionsthe struggle over slavery, the fight for economic justice, the rise of and threats to civil liberties, integration, etc. It won't, because no one in our past can be morally wrong in any profound sense; a little short-sighted, maybe, but not bad. Our historians know better than this, but they have to sell books-in every state, and to every Board of Education and vigilante group that may scrutinize them for some suspicion of subversion. A couple of decades ago, David Saville Muzzev used to have to travel around the country defending his texts from every conceivable charge including one that he was in the pay of King George. Even Professor Merle Curti, one of the leaders of the American historical profession and a specialist in intellectual history, has just written a text which is, as ever, a dreary procession of political and military history giving no sense of the intellectual and cultural life of the country and the profound moral questions which informed it, and which could make it come to life. This improverishes Americans of any sense of the continuing significance of their past in order to please the bigots and chauvinists, and reinforces the myth of a pure past with the authority of recognized experts. Our history must be seen as a united march forward, everybody helping in his way. We mix a little of Jefferson's wisdom with a little of Hamilton's and get the ever-better present. The conventional wisdom was, is, and ever shall be so.

There are other manifestations. The current fuss about Keynesianism at Harvard, financed by men who would probably be broke today if it were not for Keynes, is a cousin to this myth-making, because it arises in part from the sense of these men that principles of economic organization associated with the reassuring view of the past, the principles of "our forefathers," are endangered. So is the sad American dream of a past innocence which can somehow be regained, maybe by some effort of self-purgation and renewal, maybe by killing off evil externally. (These unite in the "let's get tough" attitude of the liberals in power.) A more direct effort to keep the past pure is now being made by the Birchers and their fellow-travellers backward.

Possibly a culture needs a unifying myth; but, if so, it is not necessarily one of a blameless past, of pure forefathers, of a descent from wise-men. The central drama of Christianity, we might recall, is of a monstrous shared crime in the past. I will not argue that its effects have been entirely salutary, but it did make for humility and second thoughts. Americans have been trying to forget it from the beginning, and they have gone to the other extreme. In spite of our myth, we did not, in crossing the ocean, leave any of the guilt of the old world behind, nor any of the other liabilities of the human condition.

PROJECTIVITY. Inherent in what has been said about bewilderment and myth-making is the tendency to attack evil in external forms. Projectivity refers to that mechanism; the evil we sense in ourselves is projected on to some convenient screen, there to be killed. When the enemy is demolished, we feel pure, and that feeling betrays what we were really attacking. But the feeling never lasts, and we have to find another enemy. The artistic mentality has long been sensitive to this theme in American life, but none more than Melville, whose Moby Dick was a brilliant delineation of the cultural flaw. In a society that had known witch-hunting, hysteria against the British and domestic loyalists, extremes of sectional, sectarian, and race hatreds, slavery with its irrational cruelties, the anti-Masonic movement, and the Know-Nothing persecution of Catholic immigrants, Melville managed to isolate the mechanism of guilt and projection, and he epitomized them in the figure of Captain Ahab, who drags the rabble crew of democracy along with him on his destructive quest for satisfaction. When Starbuck cries out that vengeance on a dumb brute that smote Ahab out of blind instinct is madness, he is talking to himself. Neither Ahab nor the crew listens, and there will be no rest for them-nor for Starbuck, a familiar figure to us now-until the White Whale is dead.

Contemporary examples of projectivity in our domestic social affairs and in international relations are too numerous and obvious to mention. Naturally the belief that the "other" is all bad, beyond the pale of humanity, etc., aids us in suspending the rules and our own ideals when dealing with him. As Max Lerner, theorist and spokesman for the high ideals of modern liberalism, said in *The New York Post* after the Cuban invasion, "a little dirty work is justified in wiping out a regime that menaces our security." Not a lesson I will teach my children, but then one had to be in a pretty bad state to imagine that Cuba menaced our security anyway, and that is the point.

But the most disturbing of the characteristics is the last.

THE SENSE OF EMPTINESS. Dirty work, whether it be overthrowing regimes that stray from the right or rigging quiz shows, is work for men who do not believe in their own integrity enough to trust their natural (but "soft") revulsion at certain kinds of behavior. But integrity, or "wholeness," is a complex thing; what I mean by it can perhaps best be understood by discussing an extreme manifestation of the mentality which has lost it. I refer to the literature of the far right wing in America. In a study done for The Fund for the Republic not long ago, Richard Hofstader isolated the themes that are common to this literature from the early nineteenth century to the present. His study was done before the rise of the John Birch Society, the Christian anti-Communist Crusade, and the dozens of similar vigilante groups which have begun to raid the countryside, but their imagery fits the pattern perfectly. Somewhere a conspiracy has been hatched against us. The conspirators have no human failings and make no mistakes; they are all-wise and all-powerful. Everything that happens in history is plotted by them; all goes off according to plan. (An amazing ingenuity goes into reinterpreting history to suit this kind of a pattern, so that everything benefits the enemy.) The conspiracy seeks above all to get us in its "clutches," to use and manipulate us for its purposes. (It is never clear what those purposes are.) The striking element in this imagery is the defenselessness of the self. We are mere blobs, without arms or legs to fight back or to outmaneuver the dark conspiracy, and, most strangely, without a mind to reason with. The students objecting to the HUAC are "dupes"; they do what they are told. They cannot possibly see through the conspiracy. They certainly have no reasons of their own.

There are unfortunately more familiar forms of this imagery; would that it were limited to the cranks. Our press exercises almost as much ingenuity as the Birch Society in interpreting all recent history as a gain for the Soviet Bloc and a loss for us, when in fact the Soviets have suffered serious losses in Hungary, in the Congo, in the Middle

East, in the manifest bankruptcy of East Germany, and with the insubordination successfully of Yugoslavia, China, and Albania. They are also being taken for a costly ride by neutrals with their hands out like Egypt, Indonesia and, no doubt, Katanga, and their agricultural crises are exploding the myth of their superior productive powers. None of this counts, though; we seem to be convinced of their thesis that history is on their side. Consider too the talk of the emptiness and impotence of our "national purpose," the fear that our economy and free institutions are not viable, the despair that impels the arms race. Consider the widespread sense of individual powerlessness, the feeling that "they" make the decisions, that we have no way to affect history. We mistrust our own opinions and suspend our own consciences.

One characteristic of the sense of emptiness is the fear of loss of control, a fear which makes for rigidity and suspicion of new proposals and alternative courses. I think this is behind the retreat of many Americans into a sort of anti-intellectual "show-me" stance when confronted with anyone who argues that change for the better is possible and that there are some ideas available to point the way. Any change seems to threaten an explosion; a crack in the surface or an intrusive element may result in everything falling apart. Consider our exaggerated fears of revolution, how fantastically we have enlarged the significance of the "revolutionary" American Communist Party, or how badly we respond to change in the outside world, especially when it is carried out by men in beards and sloppy clothes who seem like our undisciplined beatniks. People from warm climates, in lands of long sunny seasons and afternoon siestas, seem much too uncontrolled to us anyway; it is a pain to have to deal seriously with them, and we are doing so now in the Alliance for Progress only after it became necessary to Cold War strategy. At home, Jews and Negroes arouse ever-renewed hostility among us by allowing their emotions to flow more freely than the White Christian American dares. (The new Negro, like the cool jazzman and the nonviolent sitters-in, tries to escape this response pattern by being very buttoned-down in dress and demeanor.) The extreme case of the mentality which thus hates freedom of expression was graphically illuminated in the televised McCarthy hearings; who can forget how the Senator's strange laughter, as he pursued his victims. leaked out of his masklike face as if against his will? But we should

not dwell on neurotic manifestations, because the fear of loss of control is more significant in its widespread "normal" forms of suspicion of change, of intellectuals, of theory, of political goals, of utopian thought, of diplomatic initiatives, of socalism, of humanitarianism, of public spending, of budgetary deficit, and so on. Arguments against such things, when they are articulated, make them out to be certain to knock away the last prop of the tottering structure of order. They often have the tone of a man afraid that he may at any moment lose hold of the shell that covers the meaningless void—or restrains the explosive evil—that he senses in the human breast.

The sense of emptiness arouses tremendous anxiety, and whatever promises to cover the void by building up the shell is taken up eagerly. Conversely, whatever threatens nakedness and exposure is a threat to the personal defense system. The relationship of all this to the imagery of armaments is unfortunately direct. The fear that we are hollow and impotent makes Kennedy's youth and resolute virility important. Leave it to him. We don't have the resources but he does. And who are we to criticize if he finally requests those "additional powers" which he said in his preparedness speech that he would "not hesitate to request" if the situation seems to warrant them. It's an ironical figure of speech, Heaven knows, his asking us for powers.

Any of these characteristics taken separately is annoying, but why are they ominous?

If we found these traits in an individual, we would recognize them immediately as a pattern familiar to the psychoanalyst. This is not meant as a snide comment. Let us assume that we are dealing with an individual; how would we explain the pattern? We would begin with the child. All children feel rebellious toward their parents, particularly their fathers, who exercise absolute authority and sometimes divert the affection children feel is due them. At times they would even like to kill one or both of their parents. Most children resolve this rebelliousness in time, and eventually can get to know their parents as human beings, at once respectable and fallible. But some children never achieve this resolution. Their rebelliousness lives on in them, suppressed, but just beneath the surface. Such a child feels guilt whenever he is aware of his rebelliousness, whenever his badness breaks through to the surface. After all, what is more evil than killing one's parents? He must go to any lengths to avoid that

disabling guilt, and so he must take pains to be a good and dutiful son. He is afraid ever to blame his parents, or to think bad thoughts about them. And, in time, he comes to hate and fear people who seem to represent change or renunciation of past ways, including anyone who even questions sanctified authority. They must be punished, just as he feels he really should be punished. He also despises weakness, softness, ambivalence, empathy, and failure both in others and in himself, because his goodness must include a reverence for authority and absolute strength, the qualities of the primal parent. He adulates the ruthlessly successful and the cocksure, and takes his resentments out on the weak. Finally, because he dares not be bad. he needs to interpret everything so that he can continue to think himself good. He cannot admit that he is not very close to his egoideal, and he blinds himself to his faults. He fears the voice of reason and analysis which might tell him wherein he fails; he fears psychogenetic explanation of his behavior which implicitly question the wisdom and goodness of those in the past; and so he needs to externalize all evil he discovers in himself, and to explain his badness, when it occurs, as a thrust at him from the outside.

In this pattern it is easy to see the characteristics of self-right-eousness, punitiveness, bewilderment, myth-making, and projectivity. And the tragic sense of emptiness represents the inevitable failure of the whole system; for it is the result of the guilt, indeed, the self-hatred, that leaks through anyway. When all is said and done, we are no good. There is nothing to us.

The similarity of the patterns I have outlined suggests that we must look not only to individual childhoods but to broad social patterns for explanation. To me it adds up to a profoundly critical view of society, but that is neither here nor there. I mean only to suggest that these characteristics of our national response are linked, and that they may be a widespread response of many people to situations of danger, uncertainty, conflict, and change. We have tended to think of the authoritarian pattern—for this is what I have been discussing—as a German problem, while America remains a basion of freedom. We were warned a decade ago, by The Authoritarian Personality, that we should not be so sanguine, but its focus on anti-Semitism and fass ism made it too easy to presume that it had no relevance to the mainstream of American life. A new look at current events and at history, however, ought to remind us that the pattern slumbers in much that is

common to us and in our traditions. This is why right-wingers seem to find such support from the past, and why I do not take their rhetoric lightly: it speaks too well to the national mood in times like this, and finds its way, modified but recognizable, into our policy and our manner of perceiving situations of change.

Roger Hagan, 27, is a Teaching Fellow at Harvard. He is the editor of the Committee of Correspondence Newsletter.

# "INTELLIGENCE, EXPERIMENTATION AND TASTE"

With CONTACT 9, we begin our third year of publication. Still a newcomer perhaps, but now an important one. During the past two years CONTACT has published (and will continue to do so) people of the stature of Aldous Huxley, C. Wright Mills and Nelson Algren. But it is the "unknown" names—in this issue names like Brahna Trager and John Ihle and Roger Hagan that make CONTACT essential for an understanding of "New Writing, Art and Ideas."

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Otto Eglau

Courtesy of IGAS, New York

#### THE DESTROYERS

Slowly awaiting the last of the automobiles, I lean at the rail and look into the sun, feeling the ferry shuddering in my pulse as if some animal loose in its skin and clinking in its bones coughed up a final breath before it died, discharging all the juices of its organs in slicks of oil and scum over the water rainbowed like corruption, so that a convoy barely distinguishable as naval vessels seems grimly netted in a tragedy of stain our side of starboard. Could it have been bananas in the hold. a freighter stricken six days in a calm off Panama. cages of monkeys lunatic with heat. the cocoa-butter rancid with the sea.

adrift from Norfolk
east on a breakfast wind of bacon grease,
sewage from Newport News and Hampton Roads
and the backwaters of the navy towns,
all of us passionate sailors on the deck
guzzling beer,
wise over poker, crafty at the flush,
the stillness our tattoos against the light
hammering their own suns upon the sea,
health like a pennant flapping from the mast

Or was the odor merely orange-rinds

to signify breeze in the sails, a dazzling weather, the animals restored.

The last of the automobiles have come aboard, we travelers on the trek from Miami Beach, pilgrims from Mecca white in the teeth and sumptuous with the sun, north to the winter's fierce eleven months before the scattering blind and south again, gathering secret in the aging eye seventy squandered Augusts of our lives irrevocable one summer, mortally late,

foolish what we desired and worse than foolish the desiring;

not wise men from the hills, suffering heat and snow, scales on the lips and bleeding at the feet, walking two thousand miles broken and proud with hunger: not naked at the Ganges to be blessed,

not wizened bodies wholly faith and commitment, nothing skin and bone, beneath the sheets and rags;

not dedicated men taking to coals

better to tread the brilliance and the flame of their devotions, but the inheritors of a destitution read on the face and written in the blood: the insufficiencies of setting out,

of being there, of looking,
imperfect views and brittle souvenirs;
the quite fantastic effort every year,
sharing the pretense implicit in the going,
meager the journey,
pitiful each attempt to imitate
the gestures of expenditure and voyage,

the syllable of life, the sound's enactment, returning always poorer than before,
again reduced,
again too small,
and nothing touched but shall be left behind,
carrying expectation in the nostrils
heavy and hot, as if
tomorrow on the wind around the corner
promised an air
twenty seductions brighter than today;
and nothing learned that shall not be unlearned,
shall not be gone again
and once more found too foolish to be gone;
the vanity to spell out F L O R I D A

thinking that, lettered green, it stands as anything except the scene unchangeably ourselves, a map of the world a fiction in our hands.

Better to have been left
alone in a driftwood shack,
back to the wall and settled on the floor
listening to the raging of the sea,
watching the evening slowly coming in
and the stupendous failure of the light,
frost and a gull's white cry,

only a bowl of soup, a crust of bread, a single penny candle for the cold.

I lean at the rail and sicken in the sun, twenty-eight years at sea, no coast in sight, sun in the brain and salt instead of eyes, Panama and the voyage fantasies, Central America spoiling in the sea and only ghosts decaying in the hold.

I lean in the sun and sicken at the rail, a juke-box pumping and the foam of beer a wake about the dice splayed from our hands across some fated field of fuel drums, dry jibs and life-preservers,
playing the game
as if a destiny shall be determined
marshalling dimes and fattening the pot,
at last the mist
and the difficult fact of our proximity
revealing the formerly arbitrary nature
of navy warships riding out at anchor:
not carriers, nor battleships, nor cruisers,

but destroyers,
rows of destroyers swaying sleek and still,
no crews to sail them, no one here to care,
rats on the decks, all hands on liberty,
dark coffee on a wind that blows from shore;
destroyers each with numbers on the hull,
letters and numbers done a fathom tall
painted on every shade of vanity,
the vanity of spelling out D E S T R O Y E R

and thinking, wavered muddy on the water, that it shall pass as anything except

destruction like a wreath
lowered above our heads
to mark the doom we stayed with to the end,
tooting of loss and shipwreck down the fog,
buoys in the channel, lights to warn of shoals
to no avail, we sailors washed ashore
in a steam of beer and urine, sprawled with a girl

in whatever beds shall have us tonight and in the morning, drunk on our sweat

from Little Creek to Rio to Villefranche. There is a road skirting that barbarous coast

from Norfolk twenty-eight miles to Virginia Beach, the miles of my years and all dead-ends of my life:

the Military Highway, hamburger stands, motels and liquor stores spilling their lights from one dusk into the next twenty-four hours and seven days a week the waste of my years and all the nights of my life, packed the four seasons with a trade in sex more precious than all the swart mahogany brought out of the valley of the Amazon at the expense of sixty thousand Brazilians whose sweltering lives shall never matter to us,

more prosperous than pure salt and silks that crossed Eurasia to Cathay at a cost to be computed, by the caring, in caravans of skulls beneath Tibet;

twelve lanes for traffic, six in each direction,
paved with the sweetest asphalt in the world,
accommodating the needs
of all the services
hungering at the military installations

thriving in the area,
a highway being constantly improved
with wider sewer trenches,
more neon, new motels.

its concrete three feet thick
so that it long support
a commerce that would shame
the coming and the going
through the White Russian hovels in Shanghai,
the blonde Chinese, their teeth of solid gold
to match the deepest yellow in their hair;
the paper-frail riverboats in Tokyo harbor,

bobbing the night long under the body's slightest movement on the mats; the Houses of Vera Cruz low to the ground and reeking of tequila, somewhere a stray dog barking down the night; or the elaborate Parlours of Hayana

heavy with rum and jasmin,
Mama Castillo chewing a cigar;

the bedrooms of Key West in dollar clip-joints facing garbage alleys the ports of my years and all the lusts of my life, linen long soiled, tarantulas at the wrist;

The Tents in Casablanca,

dust from the desert raspy on the air and flaying from one canvas to another seeking us out, impatient for the answer if it be here we lie, and in whose name: or the shuttered Porches in downtown Honolulu under the oleander. palm leaves for pillows, the breakers whispering all night what they must; the huts lining the hills of Istanbul, partridge on spits, plum wine, the Black Sea choked with stars: or The Caves at Gibraltar, echoing with their jest in Spanish and London cockney lest the apes come down at any moment for a night of sport themselves and scramble rank and male to share their beds.

Could it have been myself, that agony of cargo in the hold, wherever I have traveled grief the tariff. bones in the sea wherever I have sailed, irony jammed in the machinery rounding the Cape of Good Hope past the extremest point of the last peninsula, the graces of what final island group studding the sea with landfall, belief spelled Indies, love boldly written Archipelago, decomposition like the stench of fruit mouldering off the coast of the Dry Tortugas twenty-eight years, and maggots at the helm. I lean on the wheel and sicken at the sail, Driven the weather and the sea sheer loss. the moon blown out, disaster in the log, a single penny candle for the dark.

## OH JERUSALEM

UNCLE MOISHE-MOSES-MORRIS-MAURICE was sitting on the sofa with his feet flat on the floor and his hands lightly on his knees. He gave the impression of having waited for us in that pose for a long and trying time. Plump and nervous, he was like a bumblebee poised on a sofa.

Ours was a visit of duty, a time to be endured, undertaken solely out of a sense of behaving rightly. Uncle Maurice and Aunt Sarah had claims on us through my husband's dead father, Aunt Sarah's brother. I had never before met either of them, but of course I had heard about them.

Uncle Maurice was embarrassment to the family and a comic figure to the world. He was full of words and postures, wit and foolishness. He was both volatile and calculated and no one trusted him. At the funeral of my husband's father, Uncle Maurice had planted himself in the very center of grief, mourned loudest and longest and lamented that he had lost even more than the dead man, his brother-in-law. But more than brother-in-law: his other self, his self-respect, his conscience. He used exactly those words and for some members of the family he made sorrow for a good man a false and shameful thing.

As for Aunt Sarah, best to say that she was a woman who had a great deal to put up with and did not always do it gracefully.

When William and I had married, four months before our visit, quietly and away from New York, we had received a telegram from Uncle Maurice. "Your father would say, If I forget thee, Oh Jerusa-



lem, let my right hand forget her cunning." William had assured me his father would have said no such thing. But I felt the telegram to be intentionally threatening and yet clownish.

Back in New York, we had made a series of calls on William's family, for me to see and be seen. They were pleasant undemanding little calls, perhaps to be repeated once a year. Uncle Maurice and Aunt Sarah had been slow to invite us and so when they finally did, for a Sunday afternoon, we were quick to accept.

"You see," said William, "they don't object so much."

What we had thought they objected to was the fact that William had married a Christian.

Once sure that we had seen his expectant waiting pose, Uncle Maurice rushed toward the front door of his apartment and held out a hand to each of us.

"Me," he said, "I'm glad to see you, I don't care what." As if according to plan, he shoved us urgently toward particular chairs on either side of the sofa, nodding and smiling all the while. "Sit down. Sit down. Let's not stand around all day, in my house there are plenty of chairs."

Aunt Sarah, taller than he and equally plump, had remained at the door, still holding the knob. Uncle Maurice had jerked us out of her care and she resented it but apparently had no recourse but to join the group, which, finally, shaking her head, she did.

"It's an honor to have you here," said Uncle Maurice. "It isn't every day our nephew the doctor visits us. He's a busy man." He looked at William, shrewdly, assessing the damage of his thrust, and then smiled. "And yet when I see the son I think of the father, a man I loved better than a brother. I forgive the no visits."

"He was my brother," said Aunt Sarah.

"We were boys together," went on Uncle Maurice. "Born in the same town at the same time. He came to this country a year before I did. And three years later, my wife." He winked at Aunt Sarah and nodded. "But not then my wife, only his baby sister. She's been on my knee in more ways than onc."

"I'm listening," I said, "but I can't hear any accent, at all."

He was pleased at that. "My youngest son says it's there. The accent. Still sometimes for fun I say born in New York and nobody calls me liar. Only a son could hear it. William's father came a year ahead, but you could hear the accent. Always the w was a v."

"Don't make fun," said Aunt Sarah. "The accent isn't everything." She sat quite still, with her fingers tensely and awkwardly at the belthooks of her elegant gray dress, and she watched her husband.

"Would I make fun of him?" asked Uncle Maurice. Shaking his head, pretending bewilderment, he turned to William. "Would I laugh at your father?"

"No," said William, in his thoughtful reassuring tone. "I can't

think that you would. You were too close."

Uncle Maurice turned back to his wife. "Are we to have no refreshments, Sarah? You prepare all day for the visit and then we have nothing?"

"Nobody has prepared all day," said Aunt Sarah. "You talk too much."

Uncle Maurice laughed, happy with his anger turned to teasing. "You see, William? After twenty-eight years of marriage if I speak I talk too much. Unless I just say Yes ma'am. Train your wife early. A mean husband is a good marriage to these women. They don't like us when we're so easy."

"Easy," repeated Aunt Sarah. "My God. What would hard have been?"

William laughed, showing me the way to deal with this sudden ill humor. "Nothing changes," he said. "The same Uncle Maurice, the same Aunt Sarah, even the same old quarrel." We all laughed then, even Aunt Sarah. And indeed the quarrel seemed so old and so used and habitual that they were not ashamed and I was not embarrassed. Somehow the fact that they were relaxed enough to go on with their own relationship made our visit seem easier.

"That woman is Eddie Arcaro for twenty-eight years," said Uncle Maurice with pleasure, "and I am the horse. Your people wouldn't have stood it," he said to me in mock envy. "A bloody nose on Saturday night or Reno. And, God help us, some of us these days too. But Alabama, not Reno. Down one morning and back the next, free as birds. We can't take time from our business, the almighty dollar, you think. Does marriage mean nothing these days? Bourbon or scotch? In spite of my wife I offer you my side of the refreshments."

"Scotch," I said, automatically. I looked at William, and with an almost imperceptible gesture of his hand he told me that he too had heard the almighty dollar but that we should both let it go by.

"Clever shiksa," said Uncle Maurice. "The scotch is at worse mediocre, but the bourbon, who knows? In this house you can be safe."
"All right, then," said William, "bourbon."

Uncle Maurice stood up and carefully worked his way around the coffee table and between the chairs. As he got alongside his wife, he invited us to watch his playfulness. He patted Aunt Sarah on the shoulder. "Pretending she has not been preparing all day the refreshments and then not bringing them out for us to enjoy. If we have refreshments, bring them out. If not, apologize and don't argue with your husband. Your own brother, our nephew's father, said how many times don't argue with your husband."

"He said a lot of things you don't follow either," said Aunt Sarah in a dull and graceless voice.

"Did he say don't feed your guests?"

With a face glinting with satisfaction, Uncle Maurice left the room. After a moment, Aunt Sarah followed him.

"The almighty dollar," I said, shaking my head.

"I won't let it bother me," said William, "if you won't let it bother you. We won't let it bother us if they won't let it bother them." But his expression was wary and I reached across the table to touch his hand.

"He's really not so bad," I said. "He's kind of cute."

"What a word," said William.

Uncle Maurice, bearing drinks, came back into the room. And shortly Aunt Sarah followed him. She was carrying a large silver tray, carrying it before her like an offering, not even allowing the edge of it to rest against her body. Little pieces of steak marinated for hours and broiled quickly in a hot oven. A plate of chicken sandwiches ice cold from the refrigerator. Cauliflower, carrots, celery and radishes, crisp and clean, carved and curled, and a lovely subtle cheese mixture molded into a double ring. The pride she felt in her skill and her strange shame of caring warred on her face. At first I was amused, then uncomfortable. Faintly William frowned. It seemed unfair that our casual visit, our visit intended only to manipulate their good graces, cost them so much. To make up for our indifference, we praised her highly, and regretted the condescension of that praise.

Uncle Maurice looked at the tray with pride. "That's my wife," he said. "A born cook but too proud to admit it. Eat up, eat up, and

see what we are really like." Encouraging us with nods and gestures and example, he forced each dish on us and watched for our approval.

"Judge a man," he said, "by what he allows to go in his stomach. Me, I eat anything. I'm not prejudiced. Ancient laws I left in the old country. What I like, I eat. What I don't like, I don't eat and that isn't much. Jews are a fat people, you may have noticed, because we like to eat."

"I'm not fat," said William.

His voice fell on silence. Instinctively we both knew that his idle words were a mistake. Uncle Maurice looked at each of us, and at his wife.

"You have a shiksa cook," he said. "But for us none of your over-cooked roast beef eaten only to get us to the next meal. We eat for pleasure and grow fat with pleasure."

"Why so proud right now?" asked Aunt Sarah. "You always tell me to reduce."

"I tease you," said Uncle Maurice sharply. "You can't take a joke. Every pound you have I'm proud of. Look at our niece, skinny as a rail. Not that I mind, I like it," he went on to me, "but your people think we're stingy and won't spend money. How account for our weight then? That costs money. I've had a thousand meals in gentile homes and gone away hungry. Eat, they said, but what was there to eat?"

"Please, Maurice," said Aunt Sarah. "Don't talk like that. He doesn't mean it."

Signals passed between William and me. Endure, endure, he said, it won't last long. I don't mind, I said, don't you. William gestured. A clown. Yes, a clown.

"Oh it was enough all right," said Uncle Maurice quickly. He leaned toward me, showing his good will. "The food, I'm not complaining, don't think that. They were my friends, the Christians, and I broke bread in their homes. Fine people, too, without prejudice, like yourself, like me. I was like a brother in the family. A step-brother. No, I don't mean that, I'm kidding, making a joke for my niece."

"It isn't a good joke," said Aunt Sarah. "Who can understand your jokes? Don't make them." She spoke in a warning tone and watched him with suspicion.

Uncle Maurice ignored her. "I don't say scratch a gentile deep enough and you find an anti-semite. When we say that, we ask for it. It's our fault. I say scratch a gentile and if he itches you find a friend. It's a Christian world and if you find friends among them that's good. Walk careful and carry a big stick like the president said. But be willing. Not all Jews can do it. I can. They think they're too good for it. And when trouble comes they wonder why. They speak yiddish in the goyim's faces and call them stupid. I say go to Israel or make friends, and who wants to hammer on sand? My nephew is a smart man, he knows the ways of the world. What's better than a friend? A little shiksa wife. Not that he married you for that, a girl like you. You're no fool. God grant we should have as clever among us. Not that we don't, don't get that idea, we do."

His words were coming too fast and I had no responses ready. William seemed as badgered and perplexed as I. We did nothing. We sat there listening and wanting not to hear.

"Maurice," said Aunt Sarah, in a tone that pretended to make light of what he had said. "Please, no more about mixed marriage. It's not a good topic. Accept it or don't accept, but let it alone. Too much talk talk," she finished, smiling sourly.

"I am not talk talk," said Uncle Maurice. "I am explaining. I want the shiksa niece to feel comfortable. If our nephew visited her family, wouldn't you want them to give him ease? If he visited."

"We visit," said William. "It's all right, don't worry."

"Well, then, maybe what my wife says is true," said Uncle Maurice, still rapid but now quiet. "Maybe the shiksa thinks I insult when I don't. For once maybe Sarah has a point. I'm a loudmouth, I guess. Look, I apologize, I've offended talking too much."

"No," I said. "Why should I be offended? Did I miss something? I like to hear you talk." William gave approval but Aunt Sarah, too late, shook her head at me, as if to say don't encourage him.

"See?" said Uncle Maurice. "A clever girl, like I said. Who knows what the goy thinks, but she says she likes to hear me talk and that's clever. And if she does, that's not only clever but wise. I'm just kidding. Look, don't you like chicken? Eat it. It isn't kosher."

"She doesn't mind if it's kosher," said Aunt Sarah. "She married a Jew, why should she mind? It isn't kosher."

"How do you know what she minds?" asked Uncle Maurice. "Are you an expert on Christians? And did she marry a Jew? Is this a Jew? He's no Jew, better to call him . . . Look, I'm kidding. Making a joke at my nephew's expense." My husband is a placid man, he drank his

drink in silence, not even requiring the satisfaction of a private smile. Uncle Maurice went on at once. "Your husband isn't my only kin married out of the tribe. The other was my own blood brother. Born in Poland same as me, but three when he came, a good age to come. It broke my mama's heart when he married."

"Don't talk about that now," said Aunt Sarah. "They don't care, don't start talking about it." She gestured aimlessly in the air.

Uncle Maurice flicked his fingers to silence her. "My mama said kaddish for him. Do you know what that is? Mourning, but it's the black of night. You think it was prejudice, but it wasn't. It was his age, twenty-one only and he would have made a fine rabbi. Who wants a rabbi with a Christian wife? With a doctor maybe it's different, maybe not. When the old people died we forgave him, our own flesh and blood, we wouldn't be prejudiced. He brings his family here once a month sometimes. Three beautiful children, blond as Norwegians. The wife is Norwegian. My God, my brother looks like a Norwegian these days, no one could accuse him of being a Jew. Smart kids, too, with the hands and with the head, a good combination. But are they Jews or Norwegians? My brother says who cares. Not me. And now my nephew does the same. What is happening to us?"

William leaned toward him and put his hand on the arm of the sofa. "I don't know why you're talking like this," he said, "but it isn't

pleasant for us. You know that. Aren't we welcome?"

Uncle Maurice looked alarmed and puzzled. With an effort he smiled. "I'm making a joke only," he said. "Kidding. Sometimes I don't make too good a joke. I like to be good-natured. And you're my favorite nephew. Not like a son but the son of a man better than a brother. Your father was not only my brother-in-law, he was a fine man in his own right. Talk about Christians, now he was a man they liked. Stop being a Jew, they used to say to him. Be one of us. But if I forget you Oh Jerusalem, that was his motto. He's dead so I sent the wire myself, he would have said that. A hundred Christians walked behind him to his grave. And not debtors either. Friends. He'd give the shirt off his back, ten dollars if he had eleven. Nothing mean came from his lips. If only his sister was like that. But I made my bed and out of it came two fine sons. Both married now and none to shiksas, thank God. I beat him there."

I reached for a chunk of steak and ate it. It was a strange moment for me. I felt involved and yet irresponsible. I was sure that there was nothing I could do. Uncle Maurice leaned forward and cocked his head to look directly in my face.

"Now I've said too much and you're angry, little shiksa," he said. "You think I'm a bigot when I'm not. I don't care who my sons marry. Understand me. When Jews marry out, who is it to? Country girls and dyed blonds. For the money. I know. Not you, I know that. Don't take it personal. Why get angry? Be reasonable."

Aunt Sarah stood up. "Chicken sandwiches, everybody," she said. "Eat some chicken sandwiches." William and I reached for the sandwiches, our hands briefly touching. Abruptly Aunt Sarah sat back down, and when she spoke again, all pretense had left her voice, and it was hard and angry. "Be quiet, Maurice. You make it worse. Be quiet."

"That shows how much you know," said Uncle Maurice. "I'm not talking about our niece, I'm talking to her. If you had eyes you'd see we're friends already, the niece and me. She knows I kid her." He bobbed his head to encourage my answer. Chicken sandwiches saved me from speech and I merely smiled and nodded yes.

"You go out of your way to be insulting and ruin a pleasant visit," said Aunt Sarah. "I'm not surprised, I knew it. I said don't invite, it isn't necessary, but you insisted. All my life it's like that."

The quarrel was no longer easy and no longer amusing. I looked down at my lap and picked bread crumbs from my skirt and carefully placed them in an ashtray. Across from me William sat silently, his lips stiff, and I thought how much worse it was for him than for me. The undivorceable family, the burden of Uncle Maurice always on his back.

"You think it's all my fault," said Uncle Maurice. "Always to my wife it's my fault, and then she wonders I feel persecuted. Look. Listen to me. Where would my sons have found Christians? Who are they to know high type Christians? My nephew the doctor, that's different. Merchants, what do they do, somebody comes in our little store looking for a bargain and six months credit? There's a line romance doesn't crawl over. Let's don't quarrel. I'm a fool, everybody knows it. Ask my wife, she'll tell you. Ask your husband, he remembers. Nobody pays any attention to me. I'm not a rabbi, I'm not even an elder, maybe I'm not a good Jew. If I offended, I'm sorry, I can't say more than sorry. I don't mean to talk like that, but there it is, out before I hear it in my brains. Your husband's father said to me. Mau-

rice, if you would listen you wouldn't have such pain, you would see we accept you. So let your children be Norwegian. I don't care. I welcome them as my kin."

He paused a moment and as he paused I saw anger on his face and I felt once more that it was directed at me. "But do I hate my own people?" he asked. "If there's the choice to be scorned as a Jew or to scorn the Jew, I'll be scorned, by God. That doesn't scare me."

As quickly risen, his anger fell and he turned to William, and he seemed puzzled and beseeching. "There I go, I'm a loudmouth. Why can't I stop talking? Is it a disease?"

"I always tell you," said Aunt Sarah, her voice hammering across the coffee table, a menacing hard voice, "you should listen once in a while. Avoid pain with silence. Hear nothing. Say nothing."

"Who taught you that besides me?" asked Uncle Maurice, turning on her. "William's father was a silent man and married a talkative woman, a good balance. And I talk and who do I get? I get a talkative woman too, a bad balance. Is that fair? What is fair? He was loved by the Christians as a man, and by the Jews too. He never turned his back on his people or his religion. And my Christian friends, who are they? The bookie, the barber, the wholesaler. And the Jews, they think I'm no good, a turn-coat. Why should they care for me? I'm not like him, I'm a loudmouth. My nephew brings his wife here and I want to please her, to make a friend for myself. A pretty girl. A shiksa. But I offend her. I offend my wife. I offend my nephew. Jews and Christians, it doesn't matter. I'm a loudmouth. I'm nothing."

Aunt Sarah had been trying to interrupt him and finally she did. "I tell you now," she said, in a warning charged overbearing voice, "be quiet now for good."

"Everybody be quiet," said William quietly, raising his hand in a slow silencing gesture. "This isn't good. You're hurting yourself. Please."

But neither one nor the other could be stopped. Aunt Sarah pulled herself forward on her chair and looked at her husband. Her emotions, like his, had their own irrevocable direction, and nothing William or I could do or say could stop the movement of her rage. We could only sit and endure.

"When we knew William and the girl were coming," she said, "I said don't talk about shiksas and Christians and goyim and mixed marriage. I'm no fool, I know how it goes with you after twenty-eight

years. And you said you wouldn't. But you talk and talk, you can't not talk. You're a fool."

"A fool and a loudmouth," said Uncle Maurice with a startling shout of laughter. "A fool and a loudmouth, a Christian and a Jew all at once. That's a good one, a good joke. Which am I more of? Who knows? I saw the kind of world it was, a Christian world. Okay, a Christian in a Christian world, I said. That's what I said."

"Maurice, I say be quiet," said Aunt Sarah.

"Six churches on six Sundays," he said. "There I was, smelling of stuffed cabbage and sour cream. I was eighteen and they said you're welcome to be a Christian but they acted you're not welcome. So back I came, back to the Jews with my tail between my legs. You didn't know that, did you, William? You thought you were the only one wanted out."

"You're saying more than you mean," said William. "I don't want out. Let's change the subject. We're here only a short time. Tell us about your sons, tell us about them."

"No," said Aunt Sarah, "he can't change the subject. He doesn't care about anything. He has to talk until he makes a fool of himself and me."

"Is the truth foolish?" asked Uncle Maurice in a reasoning questioning tone. "Is it foolish to teach the young? I'm telling this boy from my own experience. Is it foolish to say no to a grilled ham and cheese and yes to stuffed cabbage? Why should I turn my back for a mess of pottage? The hands were the hands of Esau but the voice was the voice of Jacob. So back I came to the Jews, gladly. And when my brother, my blood brother, married a shiksa I said I know what it's like, don't go. But he went and he never looked back at us. He says a Jew is what a man believes, how can he say that? A Jew is a Jew. But he looks like a Norwegian these days. How could he go so easy? I couldn't go but my kid brother could. The truth is you can't be one of them so why try. They bolt the door and say don't come. And we say who wants to come. And who does? Besides my brother."

"Nobody," said Aunt Sarah. "Why accuse William? Why talk about it?"

Uncle Maurice turned abruptly to me with a gesture of both hands, half apology, half condescension, mixed as all his gestures were. "Not that I scorn the religion," he said. "A man believes as he believes and no matter so long as he believes. Me, I'm a free thinker. The business

of hogs is hogwash, I say. That's a joke. I don't eat shellfish because I don't like shellfish. It's dirty. But miracles, raising the dead, that won't swallow. I tried and it choked in my throat. I like you, you listen. Can't they say fine man and let it go at that? But who knows beyond the grave. There are so many of them. And here is one in our own place, married to our nephew the doctor. Taking the best of us, the learned man. Sitting there thinking her husband's uncle is a fool and a loudmouth. Don't cringe, nephew, you pay your call from duty and you don't have to see us anymore. Forget the family of your father. Now you have cousins on the other side. Tillers of the soil maybe. Smart with the hands, but with the head? Remember what happened to Heine. On his deathbed back he came. It's in your blood. Centuries of the peddle cart. M.D. doesn't mean a thing. Now you peddle pills is all, a middle man to sell prescriptions to society ladies with little aches. You should come back to us with the big aches. I could tell you aches."

William reached over and shook Uncle Maurice's knee. "I'm not going anywhere," he said. "I haven't turned my back, I've only gotten married. Look, could I ever look like a Norwegian? Stop hurting yourself. Stop trying to hurt us. We've done nothing."

But nothing could be saved. Aunt Sarah rose to her feet and stood over Uncle Maurice in a posture of threat and wrath. "So our nephew only has Christians for patients? He refuses Jews? You set out to ruin the visit of my brother's son and you ruin it. Why? You can't be quiet?" She turned to me in another rush of fury. "My brother said don't marry him, I know him from the old country when you were a baby, he's a loudmouth with an itch to be what he isn't. But I was a fool, I wouldn't listen."

Uncle Maurice stood up, indignant and defensive. He stared at her for a moment, how silently he stared. "That is not so," he said in a voice of quiet and control. "He loved me better than a brother. You sour life for me, don't sour that. He accepted me for me. He alone accepted me. Let them all say I am a loudmouth and a fool, he loved me better than a brother. Quiet, Maurice, he said, easy, Maurice. He said, Be what you can, nothing more, nothing less, it's good enough. He didn't scorn me. When I was eighteen and came back ashamed, all laughed but him and scorned me. Oh, Moishe, you forgot Jerusalem, they said, they who remembered only the ghetto. But he whose heart was Jerusalem said, Be what you can, nothing more, nothing

less. Be Moses if you can, but if not be Maurice and don't blame your-self."

"Then why blame yourself?" asked William, so pained, so gentle. "He loved you better than a brother and accepted you. And we accept you. Don't blame yourself."

"So," said Uncle Maurice. He sat down again and looked at his necktie. "Your father, my brother-in-law, never turned his back once on his people. My own blood brother, he never looked over his shoulder after he walked away from the Jews. Was that hard? Be Maurice, is that easy? One son says I am not Jew enough. I should wear a skull cap and go to his fancy synagogue. The other son says I'm Jew too much, I should drop even Yom Kippur. So what do I do? What can I be? Just Maurice, neither more nor less. And what is that? Is that an honor?"

He sat quite still, only his crossed leg bobbing to the echoed rhythm of his voice. When finally in the silence he lifted his head, he looked sick and foolish and shrewd. And we were ashamed to see him.

As if she had been waiting for just that moment, Aunt Sarah went over to him. She put her hand on his shoulder, and I thought that that first kind touch was the goal, the inevitable purpose of all her rage, repeated endlessly over twenty-eight years of embarrassment and quarrel.

"Look, you'd better go," she said to us. "He talks too much and then he's ashamed and then he's tired."

"Is he sick?" asked William, their nephew the doctor. "Can I do something?" But he knew, as I did, that we were hardly in it.

"Is tired sick?" asked Uncle Maurice. He laughed and looked from William to me and he seemed to be mustering strength for another attack of words. "You paid your call from duty. Next time come to visit. No chicken sandwiches, we'll have gefillte fish. We're Jews, nothing more, nothing less, and proud of it. Accept us or not, we don't care. I'm not prejudiced. Who am I to judge my nephew and his wife. Judge yourself, but who can do that? We see people looking at us is how we judge ourselves. You think I'm looking at you but I'm not. I look only at the son of my friend and I smile at you as he smiled at me. You didn't choose easy, William, it isn't easy to be William, but remember Jerusalem. There I go, talking too much. But I'm not going to cut out my tongue if nobody likes me talking. Not my wife, not my nephew, not the shiksa."

"Be quiet," said Aunt Sarah, so quiet and gentle it hardly sounded like her. "Say goodbye to them, but don't talk."

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May Swenson

## RIDING THE "A"

I ride the A Train, and feel like a ball-bearing in a roller skate.

I have on a gray raincoat; the hollow of the car is gray.

My face a negative on the slate window, I sit in a lit corridor that races through a dark one.

Stroking steel. What a smooth rasp. I feel like the newest of knives

slicing along a long black crusty loaf from West 4th to 168th.

Wheels and rails in their prime collide, make love in a glide of slickness and friction.

It is an elation. I wish to prolong. I am a flicker in the sheen

of a monstrous coition.

The station is reached too soon.

## ROUGH RED PATIO AFTER A BIG LUNCH

I am, in spite of the big dirty toe on that soft, stone-bench napping girl, the jerking sputter of a grass cutter, pushing by tortoise shell glasses and man, the MmmmmmmmmmB, that unthinkable thing, done again at exactly 2:07½ P.M. by the pilot of jets (and deaths),

I am ruffling, drifting in the sun, fond and quiet, and in the air, (Put your legs down, Eve; they impart white tricot love.) rumbling, and broken by building tools,

I am shuffling with impressions, courting warm digestion's whisper.

Though the day promises time for roses and melons, hiding in forgotten places, being the animal I can never be and can't even remember, reading foot prints on pavement, thumb prints on doors,

My body bends for a caress.

Though mind . . .

(a remarkable ant, single, skitters on the rough red brick, going somewhere in the nuzzling sun)

Though mind . . .

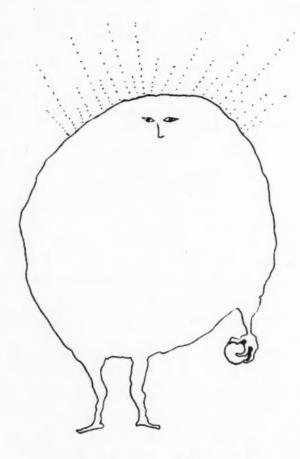
(Matthew: you talked of walking on water and the loss of faith. Wasn't it strange and oriental . . . . . )

Though mind . . .

(Why do people go around, walking down street or up; why does someone enter a room, or a marriage . . . .)

Though mind . . .

It insists on the jumbled, gentle, circuitous yawn.



Edward Rehmus

## IS THERE A METAPHYSICIAN IN THE HOUSE?

NOT EVERYONE LIKES boiled leg of pork as much as Dr. Johnson did. There are people who loathe Shakespeare. I once knew a man who threw up whenever he heard the word bandstand. And then there are those who can't stand Hollywood. Miss Dorothy Parker, for one, says frankly. "it's a horror." According to Miss Parker the flowers of the film capital of the world smell like old dollar bills and the vegetables are grown in trunks. The less horticulturally concerned content themselves with the reflection that "nothing is quite real out here." They long for more convincing ontologies. They are dismayed by the metaphysic of an industry devoted to the standardization of make-believe and they are confused by the introduction into everyday life of anachronistic dream-patterns characteristic of the culture-patterns of, for example, the early Greeks. In his The Greeks and the Irrational, Dr. Dodds tells us that "the Greeks never spoke as we do of having a dream, but always of seeing a dream." In the same way, one does not have a movie, one sees it. Obviously, this goes on all over America and all over the world but it is only in the film capital that the full impact of the organized voyeurism of this great popular visionary art, so dedicated to seeing but not having, is felt.

The literary tradition of metaphysical complaint goes back at least as far as Thomas Gage, the English-American Dominican, who wrote so bitterly about the spuriousness of things in the New World and whose survey was printed in 1648.

"And as in meat and fruit there is this inward and hidden deceit, so likewise the same is to be found in the people who are born and bred there, who make fair outward shews, but are inwardly false and hollow-hearted."

More than three centuries were to pass before the edifying cry of Conrad Birdie was to be heard in the land.

You gotta beeee Sincere, Oh baby!

The early explorers travelled on their stomachs and conquered an empire with the help of imported dried beef, which demonstrated its sincerity by sticking to their ribs.

They discovered Santa Monica in 1542, substituted the worship of Jehova for that of Qua-o-ar in 1771 and, ten years later, established the Town of Our Lady the Queen of the Angels of Porciuncula with 11 men and 11 women and 22 children. As it happened, the plan of the Pueblo of Our Lady was rectangular but it is reported that after the site was selected the settlers, all 44 of them, "walked around it."

This circular stroll had its importance.

It was the first official attempt to bring "reality" to the region.

The question raised was one of the bestowal of validity upon the crude physical data of experience by a kind of urban transcendentalism, which might or might not have its origin in myth.

"Reality," declares that great student of such things, Mircea Eliade, unequivocally, "is the function of the imitation of a celestial archetype."

The ancient Babylonians laid out their city after a model of the Sumerian conception of Paradise. They built ziggurats in imitation of the heavenly mount. In the same way and for the same general purpose, the Jews embraced the fiction of man having been made in the image of God. The diminution of "reality" that came with the substitution of an archetypal ape for the Diety is still with us. The primal stroll was a clear evocation of the circular structure of the Christian hereafter, Heaven and Hell. It was as orthodox as the Blessed Sacrament, as sincere as the dried beef of Old Spain and as hopeful as the prayers of the faithful.

For the next 130 years the local metaphysic was barely distinguishable from that of countless other centers of spiritual growth and development scattered about the continent. The inevitable transitions

were accomplished with less disturbance to the spirit than to the land-scape. Toward the end, there was a pronounced tendency toward that Higher Provincialism which was the nineteenth century version of the green belt idealism of the early twentieth. Then, in 1911, the first baggy-trousered comedian appeared on Hollywood Boulevard. Almost overnight, the little suburban clutter of Dries and realtors became the center of a world cult, the site of a fantastic New Olympus. Metaphysically, it was as though Offenbach and Pirandello had conspired to rewrite Science and Health. Ontologically, the archetypal ape had become a film star. And if the population saw itself mirrored in the antics of its new model, it was because it too suffered from what Wilde once called the Truths of Masks, which are contradictory.

The movies transformed Hollywood but Hollywood made the movies. What made Hollywood? The geographical conditions have been around for a long while. It is the consensus of most social scientists that the natives of the region, the despised root-chewing, mescal-intoxicated Diggers, were the least noble of the savages of the New World, the most indifferent to social significance, the most dedicated to all those departments of living that came under the heading of entertainment. They were remarkable, among other things, for a moral obliquity that would never have received the approval of the Chicago Police Department. The saga of the aboriginal erotic paragon, Old Man Cayote, makes the wicked ways of the transplanted Tasmanian folk hero, Flynn, seem boyish in comparison. In short, they anticipated, in many important ways, the spiritual climate that was to prevail in the period following 1911.

The old mining-camp days are over and so is the Arcadian past. What remains of both, aside from a few extraordinary monuments of domestic architecture, a few objects in museums and a few aging men and women, is a metaphysic and the caustic of a sense of make-believe that has only incidentally to do with the profits and puerilities of a contemporary ailing industry.

As a popular visionary art, the movies, as Aldous Huxley has pointed out, supplanted fireworks and, in so doing, made the Other World of pageants and magic lanterns, so close to the Other World of mysticism and mescalin, generally available. They did this quite unintentionally, no doubt, as a matter of technology and box office but how it happened is less important than that it did happen. The mystical element in film illuminates something about the film capital that puz-

zles most observers, a certain shabby, ramshackle air that does not emanate entirely from the back lots of studios. One is reminded of Kotaro's senryu.

When the sun shines
On the Buddhist altar,
It looks a bit cheap.

The devout don't really mind. They are preoccupied with something else. Their capacity for disbelief has been suspended. They too are players, if only to the extent of playing along. Meanwhile, the throng leaving the area every day is exceeded by that which is arriving.

Visitors who insist on remaining attached to the eucharistic pastrami of a more traditional ontology obviously have spiritual needs which are not going to be gratified by Hollywood. Like Miss Parker, they will come to define happiness as living elsewhere and, preferably, if that is where they have come from in the first place, somewhere near the great Manhattan Omphalos, Rockefeller Center, the shadow of which stretches from Nyack to Red Bank. Nothing is more characteristic of the truly displaced and disgruntled, no matter how temporary, resident than his pining for the "symbolism of the Center," as it has



Edward Rehmus

been called. He longs for his special brand of "reality" with the insatiety of a male Siamese cat calling for a mate. He longs and longs and longs. It is manifestly impossible for him to sheath his metaphysical roots in a ground so rich in imported Egyptian worms, so lacking in trace minerals and so productive of the things of which Friar Gage, in another time and place, once spoke with such emotion. He is bound to reject, out of hand, the rationale of a place that seeks the differentia of the dream not in its "unreality" but in its universal appeal. Three hundred million customers may, he says, in effect, be wrong.

Although the cultus is regional, its heart is still in the studio, where not the least conspicuous thing to be observed is the absence, on sound stages, of proscenial arches, those traditional boundaries between "reality" and make-believe in the theatre, where their presence is generally felt to be reassuring. The camera provides no comparable reassurance, its presence merely adding to the complexity of things, introducing ambiguities which, although they have been discussed ad nauseam, have never been fully explored. It adds to the historic theatrical paradox the question of what is live? A filmed show is not live. Then what is it? Not dead either. Apparently there is something in between, which derives from the operation of the camera. But there is an even more important equivocation, which arises from the custom, so common, of playing oneself. I believe it was Hazlitt who first said that an actor was never less than when he was playing himself. The movies, however, are a peculiar medium. The least performer is larger than life on a screen. On a large screen he is even larger. Thus, in playing themselves, the stars, who are the gods and goddesses of the regional Olympus, the archetypes of the local ontology, are like Alices drinking from both bottles at once, growing simultaneously larger and smaller. If the effect sometimes suggests a cross between a shrunken head and a balloon, it is not surprising. Metaphysically, we have been prepared for the paradoxes of Disneyland as a place where life-size people wander about in a reduced world and gaze goggle-eyed at a Tomorrowland in which the most striking exhibit is a tremendous bathroom.

Disneyland is, among other things, Walt's baby. It owes its existence to the anxiety of a bank and the success of a mouse. It is a monument not only to absurdity but to the decline of the short cartoon subject, which is no longer what it was. And what was it? In a word, enig-



matic. Take something as comparatively simple as the canon of four fingers. Why do hands in cartoons all have three digits and a thumb and how is this remarkable convention, which has persisted for half a century, related to the prevailing mystique?

That the persistence records the triumph of the Disney rodent hero whose family name is anagrammatic for O Muse is clear. And that this triumph in turn represents the local victory of kitsch and cuteness is equally clear but it would be a mistake to assume that this is all. Men have counted on five fingers since time immemorial. Multiples of five recur as base numbers in practically all systems of numerals. Mathematically, the iconographic mouse paw flouts a tradition that goes back to the dawn of things. Prehistoric Aurignacian hand prints preceded the simplest outline drawings and this aesthetic tradition is continued in the impressions made by film stars in living concrete before Grauman's Chinese cathedral. It is no small thing, the existence of this canon of four fingers.

In his essay In Praise of Hands, Henri Focillon tells us that "in both the shrewd and the violent actions of his mind, man is preceded by his powerful hands." The question arises. Are we men or mice? Hollywood is not quite sure. It is not impressed by the qualities traditionally attributed to homo humanus. Its lack of pietas and respect for learning are notorious and, by the same token, its metaphysic is not a humanistic discipline. It seeks to establish itself not on the basis of the contrasts between men and animals and men and gods but on the broader basis of the more absolute difference between animals and gods. Hence the emergence of the monstrous hyphenated absolute, the god-beastie, whose sign, in the animation business, is the paw of the rodent, standing, possibly, simultaneously, for such diverse things as a rejection of the prevailing number system, the identity of opposites and the four cardinal points.

The enigmatic use of tovs is inevitable in a subculture so dominated by players and preoccupied with play. There are, roughly two sorts, those for children and those for adults. The latter are, usually, more expensive. They include such items as Cadillacs and Thunderbirds, both of which, according to the distinguished student of Eastern philosophy, Alan W. Watts, are essentially toy rocket-ships rather than convenient means of transportation. The fact of the Cadillac having been taken over by the medical profession to such an extent that the doctors have been advised by their association to dispense with the caducei on their license plates in the interest of better public relations is an interesting development. Does it mean that doctors have begun to supplant players as archetypes? That seems unlikely. What has occurred is this. The Rolls has supplanted the Cadillac in the parking lot of the studio and the use of any sort of wheel toy has become increasingly inconvenient on the freeway. This, of course, is a national problem. What distinguishes the local dilemma is the local metaphysic. which enables us to view the underpass as no substitute for the missing proscenial arch, to see that, facing both ways as it does, it merely adds to the already existing complexity and to realize that, while this undoubtedly disturbs many people, it is a source of obscure gratification to others, who not only know where they are going but feel confident of arriving.

Ingenious but disoriented newcomers have been known to install compasses on the instrument panels of their space vehicles as a rather desperate measure. This is tantamount to wearing blinkers. It is cal-

culated to delay adjustment. The man with his eyes glued to a map, a road and a compass, can hardly be expected to take in a view. Whizzing along a constantly altering course, he will be unable to grasp the peculiar charm of the passing rows of detached villas clinging lightly to their hillsides behind the everpresent scrim of smog and looking as though they had been assembled from flats left over from old musical comedies. At most, he may, in passing, detect, amid the barrage of atmospheric irritants, the perfume of old dollar bills. It isn't enough.

Our word toy comes from the Dutch tuig, meaning tools and trash. Both are combined here to such an extraordinary extent as to suggest that the great local symbol, aside from the performing artist himself, is not the passing bitter remark, the heroic paw, the toy rocket-ship or even the somewhat ancient image of false fruit. It is a collection of towers of junk, which the city fathers have recently, with remarkable insight, permitted to stand.

Rising fantastically amid the shanties of the Negro district of Los Angeles, these amazing works of art were the creation of an unknown artist named Simon Rodia. They deserve to be more widely known. Exuded from their environment, almost, one might say, excreted, their bottle-caps and orange-squeezers, their curling-irons and burned-out light bulbs, recall the broken leaves which, in the flower pieces of Bosschaert, have the significance of maturitas. They remind us of the obsolescence of gadgets and the need in life for forms of play that do not smack of small bills. One of them should be employed as the pedestal of a monument to the archetypal player, whose arm would be raised in the immortal joycean gesture, which says, "in my time the dunghill was so high."

Sidney Peterson spent many years in Hollywood writing scenarios for UPA and Walt Disney. Contact Editions has recently published his "fantastic first novel," A FLY IN THE PIGMENT.



THE
CHINESE
OPERA
AND
ITS
ORIGIN
BY
C. Y. LEE

PHOTOGRAPHS
OF
SAN
FRANCISCO
CHINESE
OPERA
BY
NICOLE
SCHOENING

IF THE CHINESE poetry and the Chinese prose were brothers, the Chinese opera must have been the great great grandson in the family of Chinese literature, for it was not until the 11th Century A.D. that the Chinese began to have complete theatrical performances, almost one thousand and eight hundred years younger than the Greek drama and two thousand years younger than the first collection of the Chinese poetry Shih Chin.

But I don't mean that the Chinese didn't have drama at all before the 13th Century A.D. We had some form of theatricals written even before we had our written language. In the ancient days the Chinese often worshiped and praised nature by staging a festival in which three persons, holding the tail of a water buffalo, sang and danced. The buffalo-tail-dancing was probably the origin of the Chinese opera.

We didn't have drama designed to amuse an audience until the 8th Century B.C., when the emperors and dukes of the Spring and Autumn States thought that they, like gods and ancestors, should also have the same kind of entertainment. As a result they created something closer to drama, perhaps a kind of variety show with singing and dancing.

Those were the warring years. A general in a state called North Chi often rode into battle with his handsome face covered with a horrible mask. Oftentimes his foes took a look at this face and fled without fighting. As he was always victorious in battle, the people in North Chi celebrated his achievement by giving a kind of mask dance in imitation of his fighting. It was probably the origin of face painting in Chinese opera.

In the 3rd Century B.C. the Chinese puppet show was introduced to the public. Some of the jerky gestures and movement in the Chinese opera were devised from it. Like theatrical face painting, the Chinese puppet show also had a peculiar origin. During the second year of the reign of the first Emperor in the Han Dynasty, the country was often invaded by a wild tribe called Huns. Once a city was besieged by the Huns, whose chieftain, Mao Tan, invaded three sides of the walled city while his wife attacked the remaining side. Guarding the city was a general who had learned that Mao Tan's wife was a jealous woman.



He ordered a great many wooden figures of women made and placed them on the ramparts of the city opposite the army commanded by the lady. By some clever tricks, those figures were made to dance and go through a variety of attractive movements. Mao Tan's jealous wife, mistaking those figures for living women and knowing her husband's weakness too well, immediately withdrew her army and the siege was raised. As a by-product the Chinese puppet show was invented.

The puppet show immediately held the interest of the common people, becoming popular all over China. Dramatists created many plays with stories borrowed from history, and those plays in turn served as the basis for many plays in the Chinese opera.

From the puppet show the Chinese shadow show was also derived. The figures of the shadow show are made of hard paper exquisitely carved and cut, and then covered with translucent colored paper dipped in tung oil. They are played behind a translucent screen with two lanterns mounted at the back. An able showman can play five figures at the same time; two in each hand and one with his mouth. Almost all the plays of shadow shows are historical.





In order to distinguish a good man from a bad man in a play, the Chinese shadow show employs a great variety of faces on their figures. An honest man has an honest face, a cruel man has a cruel face, etc. There are certain rules in applying colors, such as an honest man has a dark face, a traitor has a white face, a brave and loyal man has a red face, etc. Most of the features and lines on a painted face are based on physiognomy, an art from which a fortune teller often determines a man's characteristics and future. This method of make-up has been followed by actors for hundreds of years and it has undoubtedly influenced the make-up art of the Chinese opera.

From the Han Dynasty to the Six Dynasties (200 B.C. to 600 A.D.) China underwent many foreign invasions and civil wars. This period of tremendous confusion supplied dramatists in later years with a great deal of material for their plays, but oddly enough the period itself produced only a meager dramatic harvest.

In those days the theatricals were but a kind of imperfect show designed to entertain the royalty and the artistocrats, who usually had a



low taste. Dramatic activities therefore, were not encouraged. Tradiionally the Chinese despised this art and looked down upon those who played in "plays," which in Chinese means "making fun of." Even to this day the old fashioned Chinese still have not gotten rid of this prejudice.

The Chinese stage never reached a higher artistic level until the Tang Dynasty in the 7th Century. During that dynasty of power and prosperity there rose an emperor who was an artist himself, who understood music and was a lover of the stage. He founded a large institution called Li Yuan, meaning the Pear Garden, where boys and girls were trained for the dramatic arts. It was perhaps the first drama school in Chinese history. Even in these modern days, students of the Chinese opera like to call themselves "the sons and brothers of the Pear Garden."

However, the theatre boom didn't last too long. Soon after that artistic emperor died drama was once more neglected. It remained undeveloped for almost four hundred years.

In the 11th Century there came a great invasion; the Mongols poured in from the North, took over the Chinese throne and built the Yuan Dynasty. They banished the National Examination and exiled the Chinese scholars who had attained their high official positions through prose and poetry. As the Mongols had no use for prose and poetry, the Chinese scholars gradually turned to drama for expression, and to their surprise they found they could not only express themselves better in this medium but could also make a living in this "low class art." And as a result, the drama in the Yuan Dynasty enjoyed an unprecedented popularity. It reached such height that Yuan Drama, like Tang Poetry, became a subject seriously studied by students of Chinese literature.

The Yuan Drama was a combination of singing and dancing, accompanied by "barbarian music," with dialogue and a story to tell. The music was branded as "barbarian" because the instruments were imported from small countries in the west and southwest of China. The most popular Chinese musical instrument of today, fu chin, or the Chinese violin, wasn't really a Chinese invention. The term fu chin, translated literally, means "barbarian violin." It is the major musical instrument in the Chinese opera.

More than five hundred plays were written in the Yuan Dynasty, and they laid a firm foundation for the Chinese opera in later years.





There were plays of mystery and Taoism, plays of hermitage, of poor scholars, of loyal ministers and heroes, of filial sons and upright officials, of exiled ministers and orphans; there were plays of scolding the treacherous and the evil, plays of enjoying nature, of happy meetings and sad departures, of romance, of ghosts and horror.

In the Yuan Drama there were three hundred and thirty-five pieces of ready made stock music which actors and actresses must learn by heart. Each piece had a special name such as "Very Good," "Water Fairy," "Busy God," etc. A dramatist didn't have to bother himself with musical composition; all he had to do was to write the verse, and note at the top of each verse the name of the particular piece of music he had selected, thus the actor could sing it with little or no rehearsal. The creators of the Chinese opera borrowed this method and composed many "stock" music pieces. Some of the pieces in Peking Opera have become so popular that everybody in North China can hum them and beat the time with a foot.

Because the Chinese opera is a combination of singing, dancing, and acting, with some acrobatic feats thrown in, and with a moral and a story to tell, it has remained as the most important entertainment in China. Most of the provinces have their own versions of opera, but basically they are the same except the "stock" music and the dialogue, which is spoken in different dialects.

The Chinese opera in San Francisco is the Cantonese branch, or version. During the Chinese New Year, a few weeks performance is given at The Great Star Theatre on Jackson Street. The theatre, owned by a prosperous business man, Chen Kung-Chi, supplies the backdrops and certain properties, such as tables, chairs, theatrical weapons, etc. The actors own their own costume. Many of the stars are professionals from Hong Kong; they visit San Francisco and New York every year, join the local theatrical groups and plan their programs. One of the outstanding directors on the West coast is King Hung Kwan, a quiet gentleman who is also a poet and a water colorist.

A Chinese opera director must be the director, the choreographer, the stage manager, the musical director and the trouble-shooter all in one. However, the directing job is comparatively less creative from the Western standpoint, as most of the movements are standard, like the "stock" music pieces. The Chinese opera is poetic and symbolic, especially the action. If a man lifts his foot gracefully and waves a whip,



it means he is mounting a horse; if he puts his hands forward, he is opening the door, and he is a gentleman; if he puts a foot forward as if kicking, he is also opening the door, but a villain or a warrior. If he blows his own whiskers, he is angry. If a red flag is thrown over his face, his head is chopped off. All these symbolic movements are thoroughly practiced by an actor during his training days.

There are no sets on a Chinese opera stage except gaudy backdrops. When some soldiers come on the stage with flags, the stage is a battle ground; when the property man moves a table and a few chairs forward, the stage is then turned into a palace or a living room. The star usually does a lot of singing to the accompaniment of the barbarian violin 'fu chin.' During battle scenes the music becomes thunderous, with all the pieces—drums, gongs and cymbals crashing to an ear-rending crescendo. To a Westerner, it is sometimes a torture.

When a star appears on the stage he often recites some poems or delivers a short monologue with certain standardized movements. It serves as a sort of 'exposition.' A man can portray a woman, and vice versa. The recently deceased Mei Lan-Fang was a good example. His most famous role was a heroine in a popular opera called 'Dream of Red Chamber.' He played the role even when he was sixty. He had been an idol in China for more than four decades. During the height of his career he earned a million dollars a year. When he travelled he always carried a million dollars' worth of jewels and a wardrobe worth half a million. He played in the old Capitol Theatre in San Francisco 31 years ago and the University of California conferred an honorary degree on him. Because of him amateurs love to impersonate women on the stage; Premier Chou En-Lai of Communist China is one of them.

In the Chinese opera an actress is often called 'hua tan,' or 'flowery star.' She is always popular among rich businessmen and high officials, who will sometimes buy blocks of seats in the theatre to give her support. They fill in those seats with friends and relatives so that there will be more people to shout 'hao hao hao!' during her performance.

There is another peculiar custom that is often practiced in South China. Instead of presenting fresh flowers to a star on opening night, friends and relatives will present her with a wreath made of new banknotes. A popular actress can receive many such wreaths and become quite wealthy.

These Chinese actors worship a theatre god. The theatre usually

provides them with an altar backstage so that they can kowtow to the altar and say a prayer before the curtain, a gesture somewhat like a fighter crossing his heart after the opening bell.

Most Chinese theatre goers know something about the story of an opera and are familiar with the 'stock' music. That's why a Chinese theatre is often a place for social gathering, a place to meet friends, crack watermelon seeds and exchange greetings and gossip. In North China a theatre is almost like a market place, with peddlers and children roaming around, waiters filling your teapots constantly and tossing hot towels over your heads and yelling orders to other waiters. Audiences shout at the top of their voices 'hao hao hao,' meaning 'good!' or 'bravo!' Some shout without even watching the show or listening to the singing, for it is a custom and many do it automatically. Nobody really pays too much attention to the stage until the final acts, when the stars appear. It might be just as well, for an evening of Chinese opera usually lasts about six hours. The music alone can drive a Westerner to an asylum. However, it is always a great pleasure to watch, especially if you understand what they are doing.











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## CHANCE AND THE MUSE

Chance in these times is never supposed to be "pure." Anyone who knows can tell you that most accidents, the odd near misses or meetings are not by chance at all, but an extension of desire, as though people and events are attached by invisible cords and meshes, drawn in like fish out of the ocean whenever desire pulls the line. And though nobody talks much about the Muses anymore, in their heyday they were never supposed to be very pure either. Fickle and mischievous, albeit occasionally generous, they played at tangling lives so that horrors and treasures tumbled in together, coming up out of the depths into the light that had never seen their combined like before.

Leila had a statue of the Muses, some of them anyway, on the mantel in her bedroom. It had been at home before she married and when she was getting her things together she had asked for it, not out of any great desire or admiration but rather because she had suddenly felt a reluctance to leave. In that moment she had, in a panicky way, asked her mother if she could have the statue to take with her. Her mother who was not very sentimental seemed surprised but gave it up readily.

"I don't know how we ever got it anyway," she said staring absently at the four little half-draped figures simpering over a rather effeminate reclining Apollo, each holding her own symbol; a harp, a scroll, for music and poetry; Terpsichore with a lifted foot looking somewhat off balance; and the masques, one grinning, one frowning at either end.



Okamura September Storm



Courtesy Feingarten Gallery, San Francisco

It was perfectly chaste. All the parts were casually covered, but because a swelling bared breast showed above the nipple on one or two of the figures Leila herself without any prompting from Fred decided it wouldn't do for a pastor's living room or for any room where people came and went. So she put it on the mantel in her own room, thinking anyway that it might reassure her by being familiar and reminding her of home. She had needed very little reassurance in her life with Fred, however, and she dusted the statue as absently as her mother had, never really looking at it. She had not prayed to Euterpe or performed any rites that she knew of. So that the prize money for her cantata really seemed to be pure chance. She stood that morning in the front doorway holding the envelope and staring at the check, which was for \$250.00 as an advance, the remaining \$250.00 to be paid when all the parts should have been completed and a few necessary arrangements made. "It is thin in spots," she thought, reading through the letter again with its suggestions, shaking her head definitely at one or two. "That's not right," she thought, and hardly wondered at her own decisiveness. Then she went slowly into the house, into the sunny front room and sat down still holding the letter in one hand and the check in the other. "Mr. Dibble would have been pleased," she thought, wishing he were still alive. Still he would not, she knew, have been as pleased as she wanted to imagine him. "What." he always seemed to be asking as he looked over his class of composition students, "has anyone here to offer compared with Bach?" They had bowed their heads under his look, even the most fiery and gifted of them. Leila had never been one of those. Once sitting in his office while his eye looked down dispassionately at her score she had burst out wringing her hands, "Oh Mr. Dibble! Do you think I have anything?" feeling that she would hurl herself out of his window unless he gave her a word of hope. But he had been vague, with the vagueness still of that fundamental comparison and had brought her down out of her transport with a comment about the possibility of late maturity and the absolute lack of significant female contribution to music. "Not," he said, "that it remains a complete impossibility on that account." Between that and this there had been the long hiatus of her marriage to Fred. She had "given up her music." Her mother put it this way quite inaccurately, for there had been no tragic choosing, no renunciatory farewell scene. Fred, good-looking, healthy, very desirable in "that" way as well as in the promise of an interesting future, had asked her to marry him, and she had been very happy about it. His passionate kiss at her acquiescence had filled her with a sick trembling that lasted for weeks. They had neither of them wanted a long engagement. She thought herself plain and uninteresting and she thought him marvelously masculine and mysterious and she feared to lose him. She feared that very much and strove so at the beginning that she had looked ill and been jealous and wept into her pillow in secret shame and had watched carefully to know his desires, praying and waiting for the fiery and complete union between herself and Fred. He had remained cheerful, interested in his food and in his work and seemingly quite happy to have her as his wife. The tempest was short lived and she had soon begun to be as interested as he was in the Sunday school, the team, and had taken full and competent charge of the "musical end of things" as Fred affectionately put it. Euterpe, unnoticed and unmourned, had in the meantime withdrawn herself.

The competition for the cantata, or rather her decision to try, had been a matter of pure chance. There was a porch along the back of the house leading off on the lower floor from Fred's study, a screened pleasant place where they could sit in the evening. Its roof was sturdy enough and made an unrailed deck off of her bedroom, which Fred disliked.

"I wish you wouldn't go out there, Lolly," he said. "One of these days we'll have a railing and a floor for it. Maybe a roof too. And cut a French door into your room. Then you can use it. I just don't like you climbing out of your window."

"Nobody can see me."

"It has no railing."

"But I never go near the edge."

He frowned slightly and she said "All right, I won't," in a perfectly good humored voice. But she began unaccountably to tremble. After he had gone she went upstairs and decided to wash her hair. She had taken lately to washing her hair more often than usual. When she came out of the bathroom with the long wet swag wrapped in a towel in one hand and her brush in the other she walked in an idle way to the window. It was a beautiful morning and the tarry surface of the roof was beginning to shimmer with heat. Her room seemed chill and dismal to her, a little cold and cavernous, though it was cosily furnished, its chintzes still fresh and unworn. Without thinking about it too much she opened the window and swung her legs over the sill.

Her robe fell away and she sat for a moment staring down at her long naked legs, bleached white, silvery-looking in the light. The sun's heat fell on her skin folding around her legs and hips and she slowly slid herself out into it kneeling on the warm surface of the deck. She let her hair fall free then and began to brush it, winnowing the long strands out into the fresh mild air. It was while she was kneeling there that she began to feel an unhappiness, a sense of sorrow and loss and a restlessness and an emptiness all mingling together, the sun making it sharper, ripening a keen hungry need inside her while all around there was this warm fullness. She knelt quietly for a while, her face in her hands, her hair streaming down, the ends cool and damp on her bare knees. Then she heard Fred's voice from the yard below. "Lolly!" He was standing back toward the fence so that quite probably he could just see her bent head and not how she knelt with her robe fallen open, though it was just the sun there, nothing else.

She got up slowly without answering and climbed back through the window again. Neither spoke of it though in an ordinary way they were not at all secretive with one another. But the notice about the competition for the Christmas cantata came that afternoon. Such notices and announcements came often, some for posting on the bulletin board in the Sunday school and some left over from her old life, presuming that she was still interested. These she had usually thrown aside. She read this one very carefully and calmly as though the sudden leap and surge, the violent rearing of excitement must be checked, brought down, almost as Mr. Dibble might have with his "What has anyone here to offer compared with—?" And without even trying herself to know whether she could still do anything at all she filled in the form and put it into the mail.

With the check in her hands she thought fleetingly that here was another secret that must now be explained to Fred. It might explain the periods of tension, the absent-mindedness like the terrible forgetful day when it was his turn to have a text and sermon in the Sunday paper and her job to deliver it as she had dozens of times before on Friday. "Oh Fred I'm so terribly sorry! I forgot. I can't think how!" And even in the words a mechanical note that she could not drive away, unable even to come closely to grips with her remorse and his disappointment. She laid the check in her lap and the letter too. He would be pleased. Pleasantly surprised. It was not, after all, such an overpowering occurrence, nor was the cantata world-shaking. She had

kept well within her capacities, trying for a small perfection, reaching back to an early simple form and maintaining a firm overview that surprised her and might, she thought, have surprised Mr. Dibble too, even allowing for the effects of maturity. No reason for sudden joy now. No reason. Still she put the letter and check in her purse and went out of the house with some vague instinct that it was better to get it over away from there.

The girl at the lunch counter put a watery strawberry soda in front of her. It was not a place for sodas and Leila frowned at it fizzling

itself out and sighed, feeling bleak and homeless.

"When I was a kid they puffed up over the rim. Like a big pink cloud. Creamy."

She looked at the man alongside her. Never speak to strangers. Or at least, now that she was grown and a minister's wife, speak kindly and briefly. Without unfriendliness. But with only a limited giving.

"Yes," she said in a disappointed voice, "that was the kind I wanted—." Leaving the sentence to trail itself off so that it invited more conversation.

"It's only a small disappointment."

She smiled then, feeling the knowledge of the check in her purse rise up inside her and flower into her face.

"So it is." She nodded, "And I can stand it-today."

"Good enough." It was he who limited the friendliness, turning back to his coffee, and she was again disappointed. She jiggled the straw up and down in her soda and sipped. She thought he might have been more interested today, at least. Now that he was not watching she looked at him sidelong, her glance furtive, ready to shift quickly away again before she was caught. He was dark, rather small and compact, his cheeks flat with sharp high bones and a hard looking jawline. His lips were thin and firmly closed, their definiteness arousing in her an odd feeling of perverseness because it seemed that nothing involuntary might be expected from them. And his eyes were deeply set, secretive, but strangely they moved constantly; cloudy brown eyes shifting but not shifty, flickering rather, so that they seemed to start and touch and shift away, as though he noticed everything and found nothing worth staying for. They flickered with every movement of the waitress, with every flutter of a napkin. His hands too, moved in the same way. They were larger than she expected them to be, crested along the backs with dark wiry hairs and

they moved lightly over the counter like the hands of a blind man, touching his knife and fork, holding a cigarette for a second then putting it down to move quickly over the contours of the ashtray, touching his coffee cup, running along the counter and then back to his cigarette again. The rest of him, his body, his face were very still, motionless as a lizard but his eyes and his hands flickered like lightning, filling the space around him with motion. So that when he looked at her again it was she who stared boldly, trying to catch and hold his glance. He smiled very slightly then and he spoke again.

"And what was it today?" he asked nodding at the soda.

She thought she heard a light mockery in his voice and it stung her to an unexpected desire to show off. Without a word she took out the letter and the check and handed them to him. He read the letter so rapidly that she thought at first he had not taken the time to do it at all. He handed it back to her and turned his body solidly, the movement quite slow and definite so that he faced her. She had meant to impress him, had not thought beyond that. This solid turning of attention alarmed her.

"So that's it," he said.

Now she found that she was less sure of herself, less willing to face him, to stare into his eyes. She looked down into her soda.

"Music," he said, his voice slightly puzzled. He took another cigarette and reached for the matches but his quick hands moved back to the cigarettes again. "Smoke?" he asked holding them in front of her face, between her and the soda so that she stared straight down at his hand. She shook her head. "I don't smoke." She heard her voice, too prim, and she flushed. But he seemed not to notice and lit his own cigarette, the quick flare of the match extinguished so suddenly that she looked up to see if it had done its job. Smoke curled thickly from his lips, parted now so that she could see the edges of his teeth. She was uneasy and would have liked to take up her things and go. He had not returned the check with the letter. It lay on the counter in front of him.

"How do you do it?" he asked.

"How-?"

"I mean, was it like a story, with the sounds coming to you at the same time?"

"Oh no." She shook her head, "Not like that at all. There was a theme of course. I mean a story theme. But the music works itself out separately. Quite separately—." She found she couldn't tell him and was sorry about it. But he nodded, still interested, "I see," he said, and she was for some reason relieved.

"I haven't written anything for such a long time," she told him, "Not since I was married." His quick eyes flickered to the broad wedding band on her finger and then back to her face again, his body still turned to her in an attitude of calm intent interest.

"It was such a pleasure," she said, "So good to really work at it again."

"Is it any good?"

"The cantata?" She sat back, her hands in her lap. She thought about it now, the whole of it. She hadn't while she worked, not in this same way. "Not that good," she said at last, hearing it now as she might if she sat calmly, detached, listening to all the parts together as if it wasn't hers at all. "No," she said, "Only one part—" and she heard it, that one good passage, rising high and pure and serene. And now she did have a visual image, called up by that soundless passage in her mind; the ascetic purity like the line of a simple arch of stone, or of a narrow grey face, cowled, upturned, the visionary eye mystical and irreligious. She smiled. "The visions seem to come after," she said to the man.

He nodded again. He had put his cigarette down and his lips were firmly closed.

"Just one part," he repeated.

"Yes. That's all."

"And what will you do now?"

"What-?"

"I mean, will you go on with it? Oh, not the changes and arrangements," he gestured with his hand at her purse where the letter was. "Will you go on with it?"

The question was like cold water dashed into her face. His eyes, cloudy still, seemed to have settled, fixed on her with a long abstracted look.

"I don't know," she said, her voice sounding bewildered and childish. He turned away from her, back to the counter again and after a second his fingers moved lightly, blindly over the check. He picked it up, looked at it and said, "The other half's still to come."

"The other half-?"

"Yes, you've another \$250.00 to come, it said in the letter, when you've finished the arrangements."

"Oh. Yes."

He handed her the check then and she put it away quickly.

"Well," awkwardly she gathered up her things, "I must be getting back." When he didn't answer she stood up.

"Goodbye," she said.

But he only looked up at her briefly. And then his face changed, opened into a smile of intimate impish warmth, his eyes sparkling, his lips mobile almost tender with his smile, his cheeks rounded and creased. And she noticed then looking down at him that his black hair sprang from a deep crest on his narrow forehead, which might have seemed sinister another time but didn't now.

"Goodbye," she said again, and went out, feeling warmed and less lonely. Still, on the way home, the lingering of that last question of his deflated her so that she could speak quite calmly to Fred about the cantata and the prize at dinner that night.

"What will you do with it?" Fred asked after they had talked for a while about the cantata.

"With what?"

"The money."

He asked idly apparently, because there had been so little else to say about it all. He seemed pleased and interested enough. She knew he liked her having a hobby and that he liked her winning the competition. He liked people and teams who won. He could console losers because that was a part of his job and he did it very well too. But he looked satisfied and comfortable that he needn't console her about losing. Still she knew they couldn't talk forever about how lucky it was.

"I'm going to keep it," she said greedily. Well, he was unhappy then. She saw it but couldn't do anything about it. She knew well enough that there was no question about his needing her money. He was only distressed that she should have felt it necessary to make such a reply. Had she offered it at once to one of his favorite projects and then come to him for \$250.00 (\$500.00 she reminded herself—there would be the other half to come) he would have given it to her. She felt herself ungenerous about the money, and even worse about having made a separate issue of herself and her money this way (she knew he minded that too) but she couldn't help it. And she couldn't ex-

plain either that this particular money must be hers. There they both sat facing one another across the table. Like opponents, she thought uneasily. And then she saw him arrange his features. She had seen him do that before with others, had even admired the way he could so kindly and easily help people, keeping himself and his feelings out of it. But before he could help her over this difficulty she hurriedly spoke. "I thought I'd like to go away." She said it in a rush, the words out before their meaning was clear to her. And when she saw their meaning to him, she reached blindly for a better one. "I meant the Gilberts', of course," she said flushing. That did ease him. His face cleared but when he said, "We couldn't go just now," she was in difficulty again.

"I meant alone." Again the silence and the growing look of surprise. He was suddenly wondering, she thought, if after all this time he might have been mistaken in her. How often and how tolerantly he had spoken of those "troubled women" who come to him. Such a troubled woman would be a difficulty in his own home, however helpful he might be with those others. "No," she wanted to tell him, "I'm not. Not in that way." Although she couldn't have told what she meant by "that way."

Now she saw that he would wait quietly and watchfully. The quietness in itself provided him with what she felt was an unfair advantage. Just now at any rate she thought it unfair in him though she fleetingly knew an unfairness in herself too. She had just suggested to him that she would go alone to the quiet farmhouse resort where they had spent their honeymoon. And she resented it that he sat there watchful until her sudden irrational flurry should subside and some dependable clarity reappear.

"I must finish the cantata," she said abruptly.

He smiled, both watchfulness and surprise disappearing with his quick comprehension. And he was tactful and sensitive. He withheld teasing remarks about the sudden needs of genius. He tolerantly gave her, without comment, the right to be individual and seclusive in her little victory.

"When would you like to go?" he asked simply.

"I don't know—" She found herself adrift again, and misunder-stood still. She wanted to say "But it's not that—" Then what was it? Well, not at any rate anything so false and pretentious as his look implied. But his look had implied nothing really.

"I don't know," she said again, this time looking at him honestly, "I don't know what's come over me."

"Go anyway," he said and came around the table to her. "It is nice." He kissed her warmly, "Just go ahead and enjoy it." And safe in his arms, contented even, she almost said, "No, I won't go after all." But she sensed that this again would raise the ghost of confusion and instability which he would dislike. And she still wanted to go really.

"I'll leave on Monday," she told him, "And come back on Friday." "Can you finish in five days?"

"No. Probably not. But it'll give me a good start."

"A good start at finishing." Fred loved to catch such phrases up. And she smiled.

Next day she went down to the bank with her check and cashed it, putting the roll of bills into her purse. It seemed a great deal of money and she knew it would be wiser to write checks, leaving the money in their joint account. But again the feeling (greed she thought it was and blushed for it) that it must be all hers and that it must be separately hers prevented her. Her shame lasted until she was out of the bank and then she walked along swinging her purse, her heart lighter. That night, though, she had what her mother used to call "a terrible fright," using the phrase placidly to mean that the fright, though terrible had nothing real in it. She heard the telephone ring, and even its sound was frightening, for though the phone sometimes did ring late for Fred, this time its sound was different. Telephones do not sound alike and Leila knew theirs very well. This was an alien bell sounding in the dark. When it had rung two or three times she sat up and swung her legs over the sides of the bed, listening to hear if Fred had come out of his room to answer it. He slept heavily and she meant to go herself after another ring or two, only the strange sounding bell frightened her a little. The next of it was stranger still. Either sitting there she began to dream, or perhaps the whole of it was a dream. In it she did go, lifting the receiver to her ear, and before she could speak, heard a low humming, quite lovely, like a boy's choir sotto voce and very well trained too. Then rising above it a good clear baritone sang. He sang her name over and over, "Leila, Leila, Leila," the last on such a fine pure melody that she spoke: "Who is it?" she asked, "Oh, who is it?" But the humming took over again, finally dimming to nothing—the whisper of static in the wires perhaps. When she awoke she was still sitting on the side of her bed, unless she had really gone to answer the telephone in her sleep and come back again. She sat there shivering, though the night was warm enough for open windows. She lay back on the pillow. The strangeness (aside from the whole experience—she was ordinarily not given to dreams, strange or otherwise) was partly in the use of her name. Everyone called her Lolly. Always had. The last time she had heard herself called Leila had been, she thought when her name had been read off her diploma at her high school graduation. Oh, or perhaps Mr. Anderson-ves certainly when he had married her and Fred had said, "Do you Leila-?" Quite suddenly then in her own room she began to feel not herself. The moonlight of course made the room strange. It always did when it shone in full; turning things unfamiliar, draping shrouds of pale color where there was nothing, making shapes and shadows, and as her eyes moved from one unfamiliar place to another she grew strange too. Though the moonlight didn't come far enough to touch her flesh anyplace. And it was not her flesh anyway, but a shroud of color inside her too, all the familiar washed away. Could she go in to Fred? Crawl shivering to his side and complain of a strange dreamask for comfort? She could, but didn't; held there in the moon-mad country that was her room listening again for the marvelous singing sound that was her name-only so long ago that until now she had forgotten it herself.

In the morning she asked Fred.

"Did you get to the telephone last night?"

He set his cup down.

"Did it ring?"

She flushed, "I thought so. I thought I heard it. Perhaps not, though."

"You didn't answer?"

- "Well, I wasn't sure. I thought I heard it, but I fell asleep again I guess."

He said, "If it was anything important they'll call back."

He held out a list. "Lolly, would you get some of this stuff done before you go? The books ordered for the school and some of the worst of the letters? It's all in on my desk."

"Will it be hard without me, Fred?"

"For a week?" She didn't follow this with the further question. He had the most rational attitudes about such things. The interdepend-

ence of people was a pleasant topic of his. In a community people need each other. The security of each lay in the willingness of every other. It was both sensitive and generous, his point of view. But he would have been surprised, even a little disturbed, she thought, if she had said, "Will you miss me?" And she left the table with the list and with a feeling of bleakness which was perfectly irrational since it had all been her idea, this thought of leaving for a week. Five days—really.

Still, when he had seen her into the bus on Monday, swinging her bag securely into the rack overhead, his easy powerful shoulders reminded her again of those nights long ago when he had failed to telephone, or telephoned fifteen minutes late and she had mourned his loss in alternating transports of passion and calm despair. She looked up at him in momentary desolation and said, "I'll telephone every night."

He raised his eyebrows, smiling slightly. "Every other night will do. Or when you arrive and just before you leave. I'll know you're safe with the Gilberts."

"All right." She smiled too, as she had over the surfaces of those old disturbances, her serenity thrown up like the mist over a vortex, a false landscape, open and plain and seemingly impenetrable, for she had for years regarded it without alarm.

He didn't wait for the bus to leave, but walked briskly away and she watched his straight back thinking that, after all, she made too much of a five-day holiday. She caught a glimpse of him again as the bus turned out of the depot. He was unlocking the door of the car and he didn't look up. Her own glance was idle, detached. She felt no stirring of distress. Seeing him unaware of her was like a sudden loosening of their intimacy. He looked simply like a sober clerical man getting into his car and she didn't turn her head to get a last glimpse of him but settled back comfortably, sighing and closing her eyes. She smiled too as she rested there, her slightly curving lips, the barest image of the moving currents of thought and feeling of which she had only a vague awareness.

After forty-five roinutes of riding the bus stopped at a small depot, and the driver announced that they might breakfast. But she had eaten at home and the greyish coffee and cold, glossy looking coils of breakfast pastry didn't tempt her to a second meal. She had grown drowsy and she climbed languidly down and wandered around to the back of the building which faced on a broad stubbled field. It was

chilly but the sun had begun to grow bright, turning the dry stubble silvery and it caught and cast up flashes of light, fiery, sparkling and darting against a white empty sky. She shivered and closed her eyes, feeling uneasily the stretches of light emptiness, the sensation that she was out and away from herself into the space around her. Then she heard a high humming sound and her response was like that of a heavy sleeper startled awake by something unknown and in the instant of namelessness, terrifying. She turned her head swiftly from side to side, her eyes wide now, her drowsiness driven away. There were some heavy wires overhead, stretching along the highway between poles. A breeze gathering momentum across the fields had stirred in them making the strange singing sound. As she looked and listened a cloud of tiny birds came swarming from the empty sky to rest on the stretched wires. The clustered dark bodies along the bars roused in her again a vague sense of sorrow and hunger and to avoid this she went slowly back to the bus. Just before she climbed in she looked once more to see the delicate flight in unison as, without song and with a ruffling of feathered air the flock was gone, leaving the barred space humming softly above her. She went back to her seat in the bus and closed her eyes. Stupid, empty even of herself and still sorrowing she drifted into heavy sleep her body gently tossed from side to side and shifted gracelessly lower in her seat with the movement of the bus along the highway.

She woke again with the cessation of motion to see her skirts crumpled and pulled almost to her knees. Her purse had slid down and it lay in the aisle. The passengers at the rear of the bus stood waiting to go out, but the man who stood astride her purse, though rather slight, was so motionless as to make a solid impediment. No one could pass while he stood looking calmly down at her pouchy purse carefully worked in petit point on a frame of tortoise shell, a product of her mother's painstaking leisure. And the man who stood over it was, by the most astonishing chance, the same she had met in the restaurant. And since it was the same purse too, which he had last seen when she closed it on her check it was no wonder that he frowned on it so intently. Only he seemed interested in trying to recognize it rather than her, so that she lay sidewise in her seat, rumpled and disheveled and feeling completely outside the field of his interest. "Give it to me!" she said irritably reaching out her hand. Then those quick eyes shifting and flickering moved over her, though he still stood perfectly motionless. It was she who might have faltered then, following his eyes to straighten her twisted stockings and draw her skirt down, to pat and tidy her ruffled hair and finally to draw herself upright into a dignified attitude. But she had awakened suddenly after sorrow, from deep stupid sleep into startled anger. And there was somehow no need. "I say give it to me!" she said again, her voice rising to stridency, commanding him just as she was, all jumbled and prostrate under his eyes.

With a swift and delicate movement he caught up the purse, sliding at the same time into the seat beside her. And when he handed it over she saw how he smiled again, his narrowed eyes filled with the glitter of secret mirth and his face opened and warmed, so that she lay and laughed back at him, setting the purse aside and straightening herself, wriggling upright and comfortably pulling her skirt down.

"So you've come away," he said.

And she nodded without thinking that there was an impertinence, an implication of a completed plan in his words. The bus emptied quickly and the bus driver after an uncertain glance in their direction as though seeking an impropriety in their meeting and finding none, left them too, turning the empty bus over to them.

"I must look a mess," she said making at last those fluttering patting motions with her hands in her hair while he watched, still evidently filled with silent laughter.

"No," he said, "As a matter of fact you don't."

"Don't I?" reaching again for her purse, "My hair—" Her fingers probed and poked at the loosened pins. Then she slid her compact out, the purse open in her lap with its assortment of combs and keys and lipsticks all jumbled together under his eyes.

"Have you brought it all away with you?" he asked nodding at the wallet which showed, thick with the bills she had gotten from the bank.

"What?" she asked.

"The money."

"Yes." She heard the chill in her voice. One didn't speak of money to strangers. And she closed her purse. He watched her silently. She could feel his eyes on her face and she became uneasy. They were alone there. She wasn't afraid, but she wished now that she'd left the bus with the others. He was sitting comfortably between her and the aisle. It had been unwise of her. She had "taken up with a stranger," as her mother would say. And now she must "bear the consequences."

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ROBERT GRAVES'/SEVILLIAN PLUM CONSERVE Search any cookbook and you are sure to find damsons, green gages and red plums listed in the well-stained jams, marmalades and conserves section; but yellow plums, never. They are too sweet and delicate except as a dessert fruit. We have tried yellow plum with lemon, but that doesn't help; the result is too sickly. One June, our red plum tree failed, and only the yellow plum bore anything. The children were due for their holidays, and in Spain, factory-made jams are poor and marmalades worse. But a Seville orange tree was still full of fruit. Summer visitors often steal them, and...

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who, when he gets halfway through a long
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possibly eat that will agree with him. & I
start out at page one, line one, weighing
some 170 pounds, and a quarter of a million words later in seventh draft and ready
for the printer, I have come down to 145
pounds. With particularly long books I get

so thin that there is nothing around ...



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E SOULAGES SLOAN WILSON IS IONY WEST JACKSON BURG BUSCH HARPER LEE ANGUS W **LT OSBORNE C. Y. LEE LOUIS AU** A TOLSTOY MARIANNE MOORE IAROVA SAM FRANCIS MONIKA APPEL JOHN BERRY JACK KN **VICK SYBILLE BEDFORD ALLEN** R DESHAIES FRANKLIN WATKI TZ MAX STEELE LOUIS UNTERN YLE CESAR MALCOLM BRADB TOBEY DUMITRESCO KURT SON LEY STANLEY WILLIAM HAYTE

Get up and push past him rudely. Show him that he had been mistaken. He swung his knees out into the aisle. "Do you want to go out?" he asked.

"Yes."

She did go past him, not pushing because he leaned away from her as she went so that her skirt scarcely brushed against him, but she was uncomfortable going out of the empty bus leaving him there alone in the seat alongside hers.

He didn't come into the depot for lunch and when she came back into the bus with the others, she saw that he was still in the seat next to hers. He sat with his head back and his eyes closed and she slid carefully along the narrow space into her seat, trying, in spite of her annoyance, not to disturb him if he was sleeping. She couldn't tell whether he was or not. He lay quite immobile, with his eyes closed so that she hadn't even the opportunity to ask him to go away. He was remote as though he were not on the bus at all. The bus, meantime, rolled smoothly along. She hadn't remembered these stretches of flat country, brown empty plains with scarcely a tree or a bush. The sky, pale and cloudless looked flat, too, like a sheet of shadowless light so that after a while she felt as though they were floating soundlessly through space, and gradually her annoyance vanished and she lay tranquil, dreamily carried along with a pleasant sense of emptiness and freedom. He had opened his eyes again. She knew this without looking at him. He was watching the calm sameness out there too. Their silence now was comfortable and after a while she spoke naturally, sighing a little.

"I almost hate to arrive."

He didn't answer for a bit. Then he said, "Yes, the time between places is always so free."

"Well, but I'll be free there too."

"Not in the same way. Touching down into a place is never the same as the time between. One way or another once there the freedom goes. Sooner or later."

"Is that so bad I wonder?"

He laughed softly. "It was you who said you hated to arrive."

"Do you hate it too?"

He made a vague gesture "I'm not really arriving this time, I'll just be a few days."

"I, too." She sighed again and saw that he heard the sigh and that it made him smile.

"Why does that seem funny to you?" she asked, annoyance pouring into her voice.

"Not funny. I just notice that you've grown restless since I saw you before."

"Not at all!" she said.

He made another gesture with his hands, pacific and agreeable, but she thought it unconvincing and turned back to the window again.

He seemed not to notice and went on in a conversational voice, "It's not such a bad thing anyway. Though we seem to make a virtue of staying in the same place. Inside as well as out."

In spite of herself she listened. "Well, but nothing ever gets accomplished if you go running around from one place to another."

He laughed. "I don't plan to accomplish anything this trip. Just go down and have a look at the water and smell some strange air for a day or two. But you—you'd never have written that thing of yours at all just staying in the same place!"

"I was in the same place!" she said.

"Were you?" his voice was mild, trailing into disinterestedness and his eyes were on the window again.

"Where is this water and strange air you're going to?" she asked.

"Over the border. Down the gulf. The water's warm and the air is not quite so—so busy and brisk." He laughed and she felt again that it was her he was laughing at.

"Where are you going?" and the question seemed to tease, to force her to make a comparison.

"I'm spending a few days at Gilberts'," she said stiffly, "It's a quiet farmhouse resort in the hills. Not far from here now."

"And will the Gilberts be there?"

"Yes, of course. They're lovely people. Friends of my husband's. I like them very much too."

"That should be very nice," he said.

"Yes. I expect that it will be."

"Look," he said, "I haven't sent you to Gilberts'."

"I'm going because I want to."

"Well, I wouldn't be so sure about that," he said, "you're not apt to hear anything new there. But you needn't be so angry about it

either. I like my vacation better. If you like yours it should be all calm now. But if you like mine better too, then have it."

They rode along in silence again,

"It's such a small thing to be envious about," he said.

"I'm not envious."

He didn't answer.

"This is ridiculous!" she said.

"How soon will you be stopping for Gilberts'?" he asked.

She looked at her watch, "In half an hour." It seemed to her, as she said it, that the tires began to hum along the asphalt, making a whining disagreeable sound. She felt now that she was being hurried to her destination.

"How far will it be for you?" she asked him.

"Another two hours to the border. Then an hour on a local bus on the other side."

"What will you do there?" she asked.

"I've already said."

"Is it pretty?"

"I like it."

She thought he was being deliberately uncommunicative, depriving her of a new experience even vicariously.

Then she said, "Would I have time to go on and come back?"

"You mean in one day?"

"Yes."

"I don't know. Probably. You might just get a look to see whether you're missing anything and turn right around again. That way, strictly speaking you'd be doing both."

"Both?"

"Yes." His hands moved again, but he didn't explain further. It was unnecessary anyway for she knew perfectly well what he meant. Her anger flared again but only briefly, the embers smothered by the self-centered intensity of this new desire. She wanted to see the strange place. She sensed it was strange though he told so little, his very reserve covering a value that he knew and refused to share in words. He had closed his eyes again, indifferent alike to her conflict or decision.

She leaned back too, watching the drifting landscape. When the bus stopped she remained where she was, her eyes fixed on a far away point, and when it started she made no sign to show that she had gone past her stopping place. When they had gone on for a while she looked at him covertly. His eyes were still closed but he was smiling slightly and she was suddenly frightened. The bus seemed now to be travelling swiftly into some terrible danger. She looked around and was surprised at the calm faces of the other passengers, men and women, in their seats, all secure about where they were going. Only she was suddenly going into a dangerous loneliness that she hadn't even seen.

"You can stop at the border and go back," he said.

She was startled, but his voice was so gentle that she turned to him gratefully.

"I suppose I can," she said, "I'm not sure about any of it."

"It doesn't hurt to see something new," he told her, "You might try it for once. But you don't have to if you don't want to. You can go back."

"No. I don't think I will. It just seemed strange for a while."

"You've been riding along all this way without its seeming strange. The border might have been where you stopped to go to the Gilberts'. Instead it's a few hours further on."

"Yes. It's the idea of the border, I suppose. That bothered me."

"Well then, you needn't cross it."

"No, I've come this far."

They rode along again and now she felt free because of his kindness to go on talking.

"I suppose I was worried about being alone then and not knowing where to go."

He seemed surprised, "But you're coming with me. I'll be there." Suddenly his face was filled again with mirth "Oh, but I forget. I'm a stranger too!"

"No. I don't feel that you are, somehow, now. But you seemed so indifferent. I thought I should be completely alone."

He grew serious again, "You are when it comes to making up your mind. Completely alone. But if you want to come along and see what I've come to see, that's different. You needn't be alone for that." He laughed again; "It will still be broad daylight when we arrive," his eyes shifted to the window, "The days are long enough. If you like, you can see a lovely twilight. And then turn back. Or a beautiful night—"

She looked away. "I think I should come back-before night," she said.

"Come back when you like." His voice was indifferent again.

"Will that be difficult to do?"

He looked at her, "I can't tell you that."

"I mean-the bus. That sort of thing."

"No. Not at all difficult. What is your name?" he asked.

"Leila." She scarcely thought that it was the name so rarely used now. She didn't go on to say 'but everyone calls me Lolly'. Mr. Dibble, she remembering suddenly *had* always called her "Leila." He was the only one who had considered that name really hers. After a minute she said, "I don't know yours either."

"Bernie," he said, "Or Bair—nahrr," he rolled it out with exaggerated accent, "But most people call me 'Burrnurrd'," and he said this last as though he had a private joke about it.

"This all seems very strange," she said again, her voice sounding helpless in her own ears.

"Not so much to me," he told her. Then his voice changed, the lightness slurred over with a sombre tone. "Some people have their strangeness all the time or a little at a time, and others go snugly along and have it all at once." Then he said abruptly, "You needn't have it at all, you know. I rather teased you into it back there. Made you seem a coward to yourself for not taking a chance. But the strangeness won't be changed by whether you go or stay anyway. You can go along for a few hours as reasonably as you would on a little shopping trip at home. Or you can go back to Gilberts' now and wake in the night in a strangeness much deeper than what you might see over the border."

She said in troubled voice, "Yes, I know," feeling something stir in her, below the placid even surface of her smooth face and good manners, and she looked down at her mother's petit point purse as though she had never seen it before.

Then they didn't speak again about whether she would go or not. For the rest of the time she looked out and he slept, or seemed to. During the time she changed her mind a good many times. And when they arrived at the border where there was nothing at all impressive to show that it was a dividing line, only a place like a kind of toll gate, she decided definitely that she would stay on the bus and go back. They had stopped and with the cessation of motion he opened his eyes, shifting from sleep into alert wakefulness in a startling way. He got up, standing a little out of the aisle so that others could go past, his knees brushing against hers. His face looked thoughtful, pale, and he

waited for a second. His glance, shifting constantly searched out her face almost palpably, as a finger of light does in the darkness, so that she wanted to move away. Then with a motion of his shoulders, an almost imperceptible shrug, he turned to the aisle, away from her. She started up, and her slight movement seemed instantly to arrest his. He waited, turning to look down on her again.

"But I might even be killed!" she would have cried, only she was silent, knowing in some way that he would only shrug again and answer: "So you might."

She stood and he reached up into the rack for her bag which Fred had so powerfully placed there for her. Though he was slighter than Fred it seemed to fly down weightlessly and to swing along the aisle as he walked, while she followed close on his heels.

The rest of the way was like a strange dream. They left her bag and his, a battered canvas, at "a place that he knew," a little hotel on a narrow back street and then, unencumbered, rode with brown-faced Indian men and women on another bus, rickety and noisy along rutted roads. There was singing and there were flowers growing brilliantly by the roadside and canyons of twisted dark rock, all of it making a kind of rich textured strangeness, free and happy.

"We're here," he said and went up to the driver who smiled as he stopped in the road, his soft eyes gentle on her face and when she got out she saw the other faces nodding and smiling too, all gentle and incurious leaving her somehow reassured when the bus went off again, so that their being alone there with not a house in sight seemed quite natural. She watched the bus until it was out of sight, smiling too, and then she turned to him, still smiling. He was watching her and she saw that he was pleased with the place, with the way it was happening and with her. He turned to an opening in the thicket by the road and helped her scramble down a steep pathway, showing her where to step and then taking her hand in his so that she could jump down from a rocky ledge onto the beach. They stood together facing the water, but at first she was aware only of that dry warm handclasp, more friendly than anything she had ever known. He laughed, "Here we are now." And they walked toward the water. It was a long beach, stretching as far as she could see. "How beautiful!" She stared at the long pinkish plain, sheltered by dark purple cliffs. There was no roar of surf. The water, a marvelous cerulean sea was placid, fingering the sand with tiny ruffles of foam drawn up soundlessly and sliding back

again. He threw himself down, scarcely noticing her. He lay there spread out like a dark bird, his face with its crested forehead turned up to the sky and his arms stretched wide as though he had come a long and weary way to rest here. She stood over him watching his face, his thin lips open and unreserved and she would have liked then to come a little closer to him. She felt a brooding tenderness toward him, though he seemed with his closed eyes, so turned away from her.

"Why do you stand there?" he asked, looking up at her, "Lie down and feel how warm the sand is. No creeping dampness under it. It comes up under your back like your mother's lap." And he laughed saying it as though having no need of his mother's lap he could still

appreciate it.

She sat down, but the wide space around them made her timid. She couldn't stretch out as he did, leaving herself open and defenseless in that imposing spaciousness. She sat straight drawing her knees up, containing herself, trying to limit the encroachment of so much light and color and space. The sun was high and bright, yet it had no fierceness. They were surrounded by a moist ingratiating warmth and she hugged her knees, unwilling to yield herself. She thought too that the silence was intense. No birds ruffled the air, the water had no voice, no breeze rustled in the brush on the dark cliff. And the man beside her was still too, his eyes hidden, his hands quiet. In his stillness there was something of the silence around them and she drew herself in, feeling that she must hold herself together. Having come this far, away from herself, any further yielding seemed suddenly dangerous. Just then she became more the Lolly who had sat with Fred at breakfast for hundreds of mornings than she had been during this whole time away.

"I want to swim." he said in an idle voice.

She stiffened and didn't reply.

"No," he said lazily, "We haven't suits or towels."

Still she was silent and he asked, "Are you thinking of the bus? It will come by again soon. You can catch it and be on your way in a half an hour."

"I don't want to swim," she said.

He sat up. "I will go down the beach."

He pointed into a shimmering pink space. "Far enough so that we can both swim—with modesty." He spoke gently. There was no hint of irony or malice in his voice; only comprehension. Still she sat hug-

ging her knees, and she didn't look at him until he had started on his way. Then she watched him, stared at his back until he became a small figure, black and defined against the wide expanse of color, like the dark brush strokes that painters make sharply indicating an intense liveliness, though arms and legs and faces are gone. She began to be afraid that he would go so far that she would be altogether alone but he stopped and though she couldn't see clearly, she watched the movements of that dark creature, until at last it became silvery, as though a cocoon had been shed. She thought he waved before he began to run to the water. And she thought she could see his naked back more clearly than she should, narrow and pale and his legs too, catching a silver light, and she thought dreamily that he looked unreal, and rather delicately beautiful as he disappeared into the bright blue water. She turned away then, disappointed, like a spectator at a play when it has finished too soon.

But then the loneliness began to be a pleasure. She looked around. there was truly no one. For miles it seemed there was not a sign of life. And now he was gone into the sea. She was untroubled about that. The pleasure of this immense loneliness was so fine. She remembered suddenly a remark her mother had once made before she married Fred. It was when Leila spoke fervently of her "full life" as the wife of a minister. And her mother in that vague way of hers had answered, "I know, dear. That's just what's apt to be wrong with it." But even this memory she shook away. She wanted just now to have no parents, no husband, not even the company of that faraway silvery creature who had brought her here. She sighed and began abstractedly to take the pins out of her hair. She used two of them to make a topknot and then began to undress, folding her things as precisely as she might in her own bedroom. Naked in the warm air she was quite comfortable. There was only the slightest coolness when she got up to go to the water. But it was as warm as the air, a slow tide rolling over her feet, trickling through her toes and away again. She followed it, walking into the long shallow slope with the warm silky water slow to rise to her knees and then to her thighs and at last when the beach was a distant pinkish blur she lazily kicked up her feet and began to swim, the hairpins falling away just then so that she swam in the stream of her own wet hair. The water rolled gently and it was so warm that it seemed simple enough to just stay there forever she



William Brice Slumbering Woman Courtesy Hirsh Collection, Los Angeles

thought rolling over to float and to look up into the crystalline air that went on and on into a marvelous light emptiness.

Though she was neither cold or breathless, she went out of the water as gently as she had gone in; there were no crashing breakers or pulling of tides, and she went back up on the beach again and lay down, spreading her hair out on her slip so that it would dry out away from the sand. It did come up under her like—well, not like her mother's lap for her mother had not held her very much—but in another, a better way—as though the earth were hers and this beach existed for her to lie on it looking up into the bright ambient air. She began to sing, because the silence seemed to need something of her, "making up" tunes as she had as a child, and with the sound of her own music in her ears she dropped happily into deep, comfortable sleep. Once coming to the surface of that sleep she thought a shadow fell on her, covering her. But whether it was really so she never knew for she sighed and sank deeply down again.

The sun was suddenly gone. She opened her eyes to a sky piled with yellowish clouds and before she was fully awake it was torn apart, the lightning, fiery and silent, reflecting on the water and the water casting its glare upon the beach so that she lay between two sheets of light. Then the thunder came, a giant roar rolling around and over her. She snatched up her clothes, still only half awake, driven by the fury of sound, and ran back to the sheltering brush. Then she felt her damp hair on her naked back and awkwardly still holding her things began to put on her coat, pulling it over her shoulders, fumbling with the buttons, her fingers trembling and urgent in the light, now brilliant now extinguished. There was a sudden quiet, the air a silky fibrous warmth clinging to her cheeks and lips. Silently she threw herself down and crawled into the brush feeling sheltered as an animal is, close to earth though the branches formed only a wiry mesh overhead.

Then she heard the soft laugh and saw that he had come up and stood looking down at her, through the branches, his head dark and round against the livid sky. There was scarcely enough light to see his face but she said quickly in fear, "You mustn't come in here! Why did you bring me to this horrible place?" Against the ochre sky and in the sulphurous quiet he paused taking time to think as though her terrified exclamation had been considered a question.

"You came on your own," he said quietly and then he bent down

talking into the branches to her in a gentle voice, making no further move toward her. "It's only a storm," he said. "It will be gone soon enough. Don't you want to watch it?"

"No!" she said, "I want to go home. I want to go right now."

He shrugged, "What a pity. You can always do that."

The lightning came again, an enormous seizure pushing the scene against her, the black edge of the beach curling and twisting, etched against the glaring sea, the sky an enormous convexity lowering over them a dangerous heavy canopy of clouds solid as marble. She cried out again but her voice was lost in the clamorous thunder. Quickly he took off his jacket and stretched it over the brush above her and then with a swift movement crouched and slid in beside her. "Hush," he said, "just hush, and watch."

Her eyes were half shut against the livid light and as he put his arm over her shoulders she opened them fearfully. Now the storm began to play; sky and sea and beach changed into fanciful shapes colored now silver, now purple, now black; and sound came, crashing and whistling or rising to a high exquisite humming, the branches around them crackling pizzicato in the rushing wind. She moved closer to him as she watched, listening mindlessly to his voice murmuring the name that she so rarely heard. And the marvel of the storm so caught her that she turned to him smiling, seeing his pale lips smile too in the strange light as she looked into his gentle comprehending eyes.

When the rain came he spoke, his voice muffled in the thudding of the large soft drops around them, "Poor Leila," he said, "You will be as wet as a bit of seaweed on the beach."

"Never mind," she told him, "never mind—" But he said again, laughing, "Poor Leila—"

The storm rolled away at last and the wet of the rain raced into the sand and steamed and then all was dry. Birds sang and the branches rustled and the waves whispered under the fierce yellow sun. It raked across the sky driving the clouds back and burned bright and red as a roaring furnace and then slowly sank and vanished at last in a sigh of pink gone into lilac twilight.

On the bus she watched the moon sail white and mild in a galaxy of solemn stars, and then she drowsed until they came back to the hotel where their bags were. The doorway was dark and a flight of narrow stairs went up into an unlit hall above. He looked up and then said, "And now will you go back?" She shook her head and they went up together, the room a surprise after all, for it turned its back on the street and there was a rickety balcony and a courtyard, the fountain broken and lovely in the moonlight and tangled bougainvillea vines clung to the walls and crept around the windows. He went out to the balcony humming at the sky and she sat at the glass and brushed her hair, her eyes half shut, still heavy with the sun and the color. But then suddenly she was awake. He had come back. He stood leaning against the door frame staring at her, his eyes black and unwavering, his glance cold and bright as a steel lance flung into a wall. He stared sending that bright hard look full into her face and she paused, held her hair brush in mid air, no longer so sure and friendly. "What is it?" she asked, "what is it?" for she had seen only one great storm in her life and that only today.

She watched him sleep, lying in a tangle of sheets, the room a strange moondrenched stormswept landscape, white pillows leaning crazily on the floor and even the curtains like twisted shrouds of moonlight blown away in the wind. In it all he lay, still holding her close, moaning at her slightest move (and Fred had gone so neatly to his own bed, so willingly, leaving her glad for the serenity of her room, the covers drawn up smooth as though the turning away was the absolute, the ultimate conclusion) his dark head thrust back, the sharp line from forehead to nostril and from nostril to chin as white and hard as marble but alive, with lowering brows and slanting eyelids and dark narrow lips still curling and wild. She stirred and he moaned again, his arms and legs, his whole body twined through hers like the twisted vines that made strange shadows on the window. "Wild," she thought, and smiled, smelling his flesh musky and sweetor was it her own -? and she thought of them today together in the brush, "Like some common-" and laughed silently that a proper word to finish the phrase was lacking in her vocabulary. "Wild," she murmured. He moaned at the sound, his hard fist knuckling in under her jaw pushing her face against his. And she lay with her lips on his flat cheek, twisted and trapped in an embrace like an unremitting vise-an unnatural position, full-lit in the mocking moonlight, and even so she slept, hearing in her sleep a singing, wild and mournful, a song broken and strange, sung against broken plucking strings.

"What is it?" They had wandered all day in the town, walking through the narrow streets into a market place and once past a school

yard where the children laughed at them through the fence. The brown faces everywhere with smiling lips and shining opaque eyes grew incurious when they passed. The strangeness of the place thrust them into loneliness together and she followed him closely, unwilling to be parted from him by a few steps.

She looked up at the huge building, strung with lights, its moonish archways covered with colored tiles.

"It's a place where they play," he said, looking up, taking her arm and leading her up the steps.

It was less interesting inside, a plain amphitheatre with wooden seats ringing the balcony. Below there was a sort of pit with a polished court like a tennis court and two men in white were playing a game with a ball. It was crowded, brown faces and white side by side silently watching the men below. He found seats on the aisle and she sat beside him, pressing as close as she could. But immediately he became as intent as the others and she watched too, seeing that the game was quite beautiful, the men with long slender baskets strapped to their wrists moving as swiftly as birds, their faces expressionless, their eyes fixed, their bodies solid and apparently untiring in their rapid ceaseless motion.

"What are they doing?" she asked happily. "Tell me how it's played."

But he didn't answer. He frowned slightly, shaking his head and she saw that his eyes flickered in that strange unsteady way and that his hands moved too, in constant response to the motion below, touching the wooden armrest and then moving swiftly away to the edges of his jacket, feeling in his pockets, fluttering along his knees. Once she put her hand over his and felt it move restlessly, her touch apparently constricting and she let it go, moving back in her seat and drawing herself away from him. He seemed not to notice and for the first time the loneliness which had surrounded them both, keeping them close, narrowed so that it was only hers and he became a part of all those others, caught in the swift silent movement below.

Suddenly there was a murmur in the crowd and he stood up, his face flushed and his eyes bright. "I'll be back," he said, and went swiftly along the balcony to a booth where she saw others lining up before a wicket. She would have gone away then, half arose from her seat even, but when she saw him return her relief was so great that she sank back smiling. "I thought you'd never come!" she said foolishly,

for he had been gone only for a minute. He smiled absently and sat down again. The game went on, endlessly it seemed, and now he left her again at intervals, or he stopped one of the boys who ran through the aisles, murmuring into the bent brown face, reaching his hand out to the brown one, smiling, whispering and then turning back to watch again. Fearfully she saw him grow strange, unaware of her, and she put her hand on his knee. He turned abruptly and started at her. "What is it?" he asked sharply.

"I'm thirsty." She said in a foolish voice.

Without a word he got up and went away, and she waited, suddenly cold, shaken with a violent trembling. He came back with a paper cup filled with a sweet drink and she put it to her lips but then set the cup down under the seat. It seemed that hours went by, and she sat silent and cold, staring straight ahead, paying no attention to the game or to him either in his comings and goings. Once there was a burst of applause and he turned to her smiling, his face flushed and his eyes sparkling and she smiled too. "I don't understand it," she said, "Tell me what's happening." But the game went on and he shook his head and turned back to it. She waited then hoping for another of those moments of pleasure when he would see her beside him. Instead he left her again and she saw him at the wicket, gesturing to one of those men who shook his head and laughed. She watched his face alive with the merriment that had been only for her, his smile persuasive and she turned away waiting for him to come back.

This time she stood up. "I'm tired," she said, "I'm awfully tired now."
"Yes. In a little while," he put his hand on her shoulder and gently
pressed her down into her seat again. Then, one hand still on her
shoulder he held the other out, palm up. "Give me some money,"
he said. She stared at him and then down at his open hand waiting
there, the fingers quite steady. When her eyes met his she saw that
they were fixed, watching her. Slowly she looked away, to the purse,
the big pouch. It lay in her lap, and she saw that his eyes had followed hers.

"What is it?" she said, "what did you say?"

"I want to place a bet," he said, "I've used all mine."

"A bet?" She was quite calm, and she felt her mouth set.

"Yes. Will you give it to me?" his voice was impatient and his eyes flickered away to the game again. He made a little movement with that waiting upturned palm, and the grasp on her shoulder tightened.

Her own hands quite unconsciously came up to her purse and she heard him sigh and saw that he smiled again at the players. But her fingers were on the fastening of the purse. She sat stolidly, both hands firmly grasping the catch, firmly holding it shut, pressing the pouch against her belly until the fingers on her shoulder loosened and suddenly the warmth of that hand was gone, and the other, the open palm was withdrawn too.

"I don't believe in gambling," she said, hearing her voice low and cold as she sat with bent head over her purse. He laughed softly. "No." she said. "I don't."

"Well then." He stood up and when she still sat he reached down and put one hand under her elbow to lift her up. The purse was still tightly grasped in her two hands and she went before him holding her head down and he walked behind her as though he herded her along, he as lightfooted as a young shepherd and she heavy and stupid and as unlovely as a sheep.

She lay awake in the dark room. Through the door the rail of the balcony shone like pale lace against the purple breathing color of the night. There was no singing tonight, no sound at all, not a rustle or a foot fall or a sigh. The curtains hung solid and motionless, cold as marble pillars. The silence sucked at her, drawing her into its emptiness and when it became unbearable she spoke.

"It wasn't the money," she said, "I didn't really care about that." Then she said, "It seemed such a wild thing to do. So irresponsible." She thought she heard a rustling sound, that he had laughed softly again but when she turned her head, his face was expressionless. He lay as though he were asleep or dead, or more terribly, as though he were entirely alone there.

"I don't know," she said. "Suddenly, I thought I couldn't trust you. I still don't know. It was that. Not the money at all."

After a while, she said, "I would be glad to give it to you now. It seemed too important. I can see now that it was only a game. It seemed dangerous to risk so much just for a game." She cried quietly in the silence and then sat up. She thought his eyes were open, that he looked at her through half closed eyelids, his eyes withdrawn and mistrustful.

"I thought I would ask you to promise not to use it that way if I gave it to you. But I don't mind now. We can go back there to-morrow if you like."

She thought he sighed lightly, either asleep or waking, and she tried to see whether he smiled but a shadow lay across his lips.

"I don't like for either of us to be alone," she said, and stopped to listen, thinking that the song had begun outside. But she was mistaken. It was as still as though the singers and players of games had gone away, leaving them each alone in the empty place. She got up then and went to her purse.

"Look," she said, holding the money up. "Here it is. Take it." She thought he moved then, whether awake or sleeping she couldn't tell. His jacket hung on the chair beside her, and she bent and moved the sleeve gently.

"I've put it in your pocket," she said, "it's all yours now."

When she came back to lie down again she thought his eyes gleamed briefly and then she heard his breathing, the even rhythm shredding the silence, a peaceful sound in the night. She waited again for the song to come. But there was just the light stirring of his breath and she listened to that and then slept too.

The noise at the door was alien. Already she had become accustomed to the soft sliding movement of this place and the loud brusque knocking was wrong here. She started up and saw the room filled with early light, the bright vines streaking color along the balcony. The door knob rattled sharply: "Open up!"

"Yes," she called, "just a minute." She hesitated and then went pinning her hair back and patting it with ineffectual trembling fingers before she opened the door.

"What is it?" she asked of the man who stood there, too tall, his shoulders almost shutting out the dark face and anxious eyes of the little soft-voiced fellow who had opened the room yesterday.

She saw the newspaper. The big man's eyes flickered down to the picture on the page there, an old silly one of her with her hair combed down in deep stiff waves over her forehead. She never liked it but Fred had always thought it very pretty.

The man stepped into the room without asking permission, staring into her face.

"What do you want?" she asked.

"Are you alone?" He looked boldly around the room and made a movement as if he would go to the closet, his eyes sharp for something more important now that he had found her. When she was silent he went to the bed and looked down at it and she saw that it was smooth

except where she had slept, even the pillow alongside hers almost untouched. The slight indentation there might have been where she had perhaps thrown her arm out in a dream. Then abruptly he turned to her.

"Are you all right?" he asked. She was aware then that she stood in her thin gown with her hair hanging loose and that this man seemed quite sure that he could stare into her face without turning aside because of the way that he had found her. She looked to the doorway where the other little one stood, his eyelashes veiling his dark eyes, his frightened mouth compassionate.

"Yes." she said in a low voice, "I'm quite well."

"Get dressed then," he told her, "we'll wait outside. I want to ask that fellow some questions." She saw the slight trembling shudder at the words and she said, "There's no need to trouble him. I'm perfectly safe."

"I'll wait," he said. "When you're ready I'll take you home."

As she dressed she knew that she was alone in the room. The bright light grew and a soft warmth crept around her as she brushed out her hair and pinned it up. But in her desolation the feeling that she was watched grew quite strong, the feeling of eyes shifting and flickering over her like waves rippling and delicate along the sandy beach. And once she stopped because of a sudden piercing pain, like a straight shafted lance quivering and flashing in the light.

She went out carrying her own bag and closed the door softly behind her. Just then the song began, high and strange to the broken plucking of strings, and she paused listening on the dark stairs. The music stopped too, and she heard a soft broken laugh from the court-yard where the vines grew. Then the song began again and she went on down.

Just before she stepped into the car the man asked abruptly, "Have you any money?"

She waited, as though listening for the answer from someone else. Then she shook her head. "No," she said, and saw the little hotel man again. He stood as though he would like to help her into the car and when she spoke he made a gesture of apology. There was a quick exchange then between the strong red hand and the slender trembling brown one.

"My husband will pay you." she said in a low voice.

"Get in."

The highway was something she couldn't see, but she felt it stretching itself out behind her, a silvery ribbon unrolling, drawing a long taut band across the blank country to the soft singing back there in the bright sun.

She began to think of Fred, even to long for him because of her loneliness. The man beside her spoke again.

"Are you sure you've lost nothing?" He asked, "Has nothing been taken from you?"

She looked down at her hands, relaxed in her lap, the empty purse was there, because she always carried it, but she didn't touch it.

"No," she said, "I've lost nothing. Nothing's been taken from me."
And then she looked out and saw that they were passing the place where the wires had stretched against the sky and the birds had swarmed. There were no birds now but she looked at the thin black strands spaced evenly against the light bleached sky and she began to hum under her breath, comforting herself until she could come to Fred for comfort.

He was waiting for her, sitting alone in his study. When she came in he stood up.

"Fred," she cried breathlessly, running to him "Fred-!"

But he held up his hand to silence her.

"No," he said, "don't speak about it."

"No, but I must tell you! Fred-."

"I don't want you to tell me anything. I don't ask any questions of you."

She stood watching him, staring into his face. He was pale, and she saw that his eyes burned, for the first time she thought with the fierce light of a true religious. She took a deep breath and tried once more to speak against that fierce barrier of his separate passion.

"Let me tell you-"

"Never." He shook his head and spoke in a strong clear voice. "You're here," he said, "You're safe. And you're my wife. Never speak of it."

And so she was walled up, shut away from him by that perservering trust, left completely alone. She thought of time then, stretching ahead and filled with grief that would stay terribly alive. Never heavy and dull, it would spread out and increase and perhaps consume her flesh and her bones. She thought that the sap in her bones would continue to surge up, driven by the pulse of remembrance. She

thought of unquiet times which would make moonlight tangible on her shuddering flesh, the smell of a rose heavy enough to make her faint, the warmth of sun intimate enough to melt her loins, all in endless time.

"We must go out," he said, "You needn't be afraid. I'll be with you." And he took her arm to support her, but even then the prospect of time seemed insupportable so filled with memory and the terrible awareness of aroused life.

They went out together to the front door where the cameras were and the glad faces, warm with happy sympathy because she had been found quite safe, unharmed with nothing taken from her. Euterpe, if she came up behind them was still not visible in the photograph, nor Apollo, except in the expression in her eyes which people later said was truly happy in that photograph of her and Fred standing shoulder to shoulder in their doorway, their arms straight down at their sides, Fred lacing her fingers through his, the look in his eyes very courageous and straight-forward, quite fitting the caption:

"Perfect faith and trust in the future," says parson.

Brahna Trager has lived in San Francisco all of her life and has been writing during a good part of it. She has been published in *Pacific Spectator* when Edith Mirielees was its editor. She has had literary fellowships in Mexico and at the Huntington Hartford Foundation, and has finished a first novel. A second is now in process.



Strombotne

The Accused

Courtesy Gump's Gallery

## THEY'RE HIDING THE HAM ON THE PINBALL KING.

OR. SOME CAME STUMBLING

CAUGHT IN A NETWORK of night-leaves, the moon of the night-trees kept trying to rise. Between the bridges, both banks of the quai, the amber lamps of Paris were tethered in the river.

Through grey-green glimpses of the night, couples strolled between the lamps. Till an evening cruiser, bright with light, moved noiselessly down-river. The people aboard it looked out, through glass walls, at the lovers strolling. Some waved.

The white boat severed the tethers of light. The moon of the night-trees, at last set free, rose with a single leaf touching its tip. The lovers didn't wave back.

But all the lamps of Paris began to burn too bright, as with desires that could never last the night, leaving the river darker and deeper than before.

The people partying through the rooms were Americans who wished to be helpful but didn't know how. Most lived abroad by financing things for other Americans who didn't want to go home either. They were the first wave of a summer inundation that had broken in April on the banks of the Seine.

Nobody could blame them for believing in an acquisitive economy that enabled them to live without feeling acquisitive; but now they didn't know what to do with themselves. By and large, they seemed to be people whose feelings had been hurt because they had only one of everything while some people had two. I was happy to meet them as American affluence has come to depend upon a fundamental corruption to which I feel capable of contributing. I hadn't been driven to Paris by disenchantment over the Black Sox scandal so much as I'd been drawn there by rumors of lonely Americans looking for dinner guests who were bilingual. I speak both English and Chicagoese.

Already I had introduced myself to several film-writers who were frankly disapproving of a nakedly competitive economy unless it gave them a headstart. One of these, wearing a sweatshirt on which his initials had been sewn, was particularly scornful of any economy domi-

nated by French waiters.

"What they call breakfast in this country! What they call coffee!" he warned the assembled expatriates—"it took me forty-five minutes

to get ham and eggs this morning!"

When you write for the movies every minute counts, of course. But why did this thinker want to get up before Darryl Zanuck? I had once seen his picture in *Time* routing the foe with a samurai sword bought in Manila after the war was over, but I hadn't read the book. The picture had left me with a strong impression that here at last was one American novelist who had never been on a safari but could still slice your head off with a single stroke, while all Norman Mailer could manage was to prick you with a penknife. I wouldn't mind slapping the head off somebody myself but I don't like mopping up blood. I'm willing to give up both if the other side will.

"They don't even know what a toasted cheeseburger is!" The Pearl Harbor Paul Revere spread the alarm, looking over at me. I didn't have a napkin over my arm so he didn't charge. I wondered why anyone would come such a distance just to be made a fool of by

French waiters.

I once knew a fellow from East Jesus, Kansas, who fell in love with a girl, but she neglected to mention that she had once had a roll in the hay with the pinball-champion of West Jesus. The new beau picked up the scent, challenged the earlier conqueror to a pinball tournament and then punched him silly over a pinball technicality, and to this very day the pinball champion of West Jesus thinks he

was whipped because he was outweighed. Was this fellow who had hacked his way through the jungle single-handed for *Time* this type of athlete or had he made sergeant on sheer ability? Is the pen really mightier than the sword? If Jerry Lewis Jr. and Norman Mailer actually are two different people, how is it that nobody has ever seen them together? These and other problems that perplex western civilization crossed my mind while I waited for another shot at the Scotch.

An unescorted woman wearing horn-rimmed glasses was growing hysterical on the other side of the room over the difficulty of finding a suitable mate. If she took off the glasses, I thought, she might do some good. But it turned out that it wasn't a mate for herself that was giving her concern, but her female boxer.

Each American seemed to me like an only child trying too late to learn how to play. Although they owned apartments and children and cars, yet they felt, strangely, that they had been left out when the real goodies had been passed around. They went about eating in a way that would give you a weak streak through your middle, particularly if you were hungry too. They ate as though they were in need of something more than food and I'm sure they all were.

The pinball athlete in the sweatshirt was eating everything that wasn't moving. I kept shifting from one foot to another so he wouldn't splash mustard over me. I was hungry myself, but limited myself to things that weren't big enough to bite back.

Somebody mentioned a friend who had missed a plane by five minutes and was still arguing with a reservation clerk about it when the plane came down in flames on the other side of the field.

"I never have that kind of luck," the pinball fellow complained at this news, "Oh no, not me—I'd have been on it," and walked off grieving over his premature demise, his work half-finished, his songs half-sung. Still and all, he appeared to have been well brought up and I suppose that's where the trouble began. He came over to me holding a loaf of bread half the size of himself, stuffed with something that was wriggling to get out, yet he kept a firm hold.

"I don't buy this servees compree deal," he let me know.

"You don't have to tip, Zane," a girl lying on her side reading a letter, glanced up to inform him, and she wasn't lying on her side for fun. "As a matter of fact, you don't have to tip at all. It's just a little something extra."

"PAR-DON-AY-MWA, Madame," the witty chap excused him-

self, "but since when did anyone ever give me 'a little something extra'?"

"Buddy," it occurred to me, "if this is your old lady you have certainly been given a great deal extra and the benefit of the doubt as well," but I didn't express this notion as I was on a tight schedule myself till the bar went dry.

The girl held out her martini glass to him and he peered down into it, thinking she was offering him a drink, only the glass was dry. He couldn't figure that one out. Then he saw the olive and it came to him that she wanted him to eat it. He popped it in his mouth.

"She wants another martini," I explained, not wishing an expectant mother to tire herself by holding out her arm from a prone position indefinitely.

"You had one, honey," he remembered the day they had first met. "That was for Baby," she explained, "now get one for Mother." He wheeled off as if gin were going out of style. I'd been wondering which of the paralyzed embryos stalking her premises this girl had gotten careless with, but now I didn't have to wonder any longer. And I liked her approach to motherhood so much that I sat beside her to see what else I could do for her.

"I'd like to read your mail," I told her.

"It's just from an ex-fighter in a fix,' she told me, folding the letter.

"I know all the ex-fighters in a fix," I assured her, taking the letter from her, "and some people who can't blame it on boxing. I even know one ex-fighter who has never been in a fix. Do you know Roger Donahue?"

This is a standard gimmick I employ, in tight situations, about a fellow who used to fight around New York. I use it in order to avoid being crushed by such issues as whether the service is better on a Dutch or a French line; or What Would You Have Done If You Had Been Joe E. Brown When Lenny Bruce Came Along. As long as I stay clear of serious subjects I am a dangerous conversationalist.

"I saw Roger Donahue the first time he fought Flores," the girl told me, "he won."

"He won the second time, too," I informed her, "he always did have color."

"He wasn't all color," she corrected me, "Roger really could fight."
"The night I saw him he wasn't forcing himself," I remembered,
but I was only egging her on. Pregnancy had put a silver bell in her

voice and I liked hearing it tinkle. She was no beauty but she was a beauty all the same. She was the only person around who didn't seem to feel that she was being made a fool of if she couldn't get a filet topped by a mushroom the size of a baby bison in four minutes flat. Anybody who didn't like her on sight had a mind that had recently snapped.

"He seldom forced himself," she told me, "because he seldom had to."

There was something to what the girl was telling me, because this Donahue, at one time, might have been welterweight champion of the world, were it customary to give the title to the most articulate contender. Actually, Roger Donahue was the unrecognized champion of the world at not getting hit, but, there now, they don't give the title for that either.

The fact is that at one time nothing stood between this athlete and the welterweight title except four fellows named Young, Graham, Vejar and Gavilan. Young and Graham were ready to concede as they were simply furious about being shifted around in the rankings every other week and Gavilan was out of town, so nothing stood between Donahue and the title except Chico Vejar. But instead of matching him with Vejar, the people behind Donahue let him take on an unknown to whom Donahue lost with such sudden grace that he was immediately advanced in the rankings from sixth to twenty-third, thus breaking the world's record for the longest leap ever made backward by a welterweight from Brooklyn sponsored by Budd Schulberg. This unexpected windfall gained young Donahue his choice of carrying his own bucket or writing for the movies. Long past his prime at twenty-two, the sensible youth made the right decision and was never heard from again.

"Roger was the last fighter wearing a shamrock on his trunks who could whip top contenders," she told me.

"Could he have whipped Gavilan?"

"No, but he could have whipped Chico Vejar."

"Then I could have gotten a draw!"—I leaped up, keeping my left in Chico's face, the right cocked and ready to cross, only the girl pulled me back down. Anybody who didn't admire her inordinately was no longer among the living.

"What happened to Donahue?" I wanted to know. "Did we get to fight Vejar? I've been away for some time."

"We never got to fight Vejar," she told me gently, "they got us an opponent who wasn't even ranked in his own family, and he knocked us cold almost immediately."

"At St. Nick's?" I asked, trying my very best to remember.

"What's the difference?" she asked, "It was Solly Levitt, who used to come out saving, 'keep punching, Solly,' to himself so he wouldn't forget what he was there for. Roger hit him twenty straight lefts but Solly couldn't forget what he was there for. Then Roger leaned in with the right and he leaned too far and when he came to he thought he'd been dancing at Birdland and one of the chandeliers had fallen."

"I once knew another fighter who could whip top contenders with ease, nonchalantly-one-handed,"-I recalled, "but always had trouble with opponents. He fought Satterfield in Chicago after Satterfield had been kayoed by Rex Layne, of all opponents, and got himself

knocked out twice, in one night.

"In fact," I went on, "this fellow did this sort of thing so often they finally had to put him in a jail-and right there is another funny thing, because every time this fellow went to prison and everybody would say he was through, he would come out a better fighter than when he went in. The reason for this was that, outside of jail, he never went to bed, whereas he always did time in prisons where the warden put the men to bed early."

"If you're talking about Vince Loman," the girl told me, mentioning a former heavyweight whose name isn't Vince Loman, "the letter you snatched from me is from him. I used to date him. You had to be careful not to leave money around when he was drinking, because he would tear it up. Vince really liked to tear up money."

I was pleased with myself at swinging the conversation to a fellow like Vince Loman who could get himself knocked out twice in a single night whereas the best Roger Donahue had ever done along those lines was once in a night and even to this day never tears up money.

Fighters who go into the tank leave my interest in boxing undismayed. I feel that so long as our business men stay corrupt our fighters will continue to do their part.

Apparently the girl shared this clever view, as she began to tell me that how the fellow whose letter I was merely retaining once went into the tank for The Champion Of Inner Soho.

"Vince really stank the joint up that night," the girl recalled with genuine pride in Vince. "While Soho was running up and down hill strengthening his leg muscles, Vince and his manager were training with two hookers from Piccadilly. They had to do this to protect the ten grand apiece they had bet against Vince, to keep him from getting into shape. They always shared fifty-fifty on tank jobs and were already sharing the redhead and the blonde.

"The DO NOT DISTURB sign was out," she tinkled on, "but they'd left a call for noon of the day of the fight to give Vince eight hours to strengthen his leg muscles. All four were sleeping the sleep of the stewed, so nobody heard the phone until late afternoon, when the redhead knocked it off the hook and the clatter woke the blonde, who shoved the manager off the bed because he was snoring. He landed on Vince, who had been sleeping on the floor for two days. Somebody looked at the calendar. Between the manager and the two girls, they got Vince into the shower and into his trunks and into his corner, then he started falling asleep again.

"The sixty-second buzzer woke him, the bucket-man pushed him out and what he saw scared him, Vince told me later, because it was something like a double-image out of a TV screen coming right at him. He threw a right-hand shot and hit the correct image and there was the correct image on the floor and half of Soho hollering 'Heah! heah!' and Vince's manager hollering something else Vince couldn't quite make out, only it sounded like 'Pick him up! Pick him up' so Vince went over and tried to pick Soho up, but the ref waved him off and wouldn't start a count until Vince found a neutral corner. He tried three of them before he found one that seemed to satisfy everybody, and by that time Soho was on his feet and Vince realized what an awful thing he had almost done."

"Well, go on," I asked.

"So he jumped Soho up and down and danced him around the rest of the round to bring him around as Soho was still suffering since Vince had fractured his jaw in two places.

"When he came back to his corner Vince said 'this guy is going to faint on me'. 'Hold him up', the bucket-man told Vince, so Vince did, and in the fourth round Soho was his old self again and threw a hook like he was playing pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey, and Vince went down as if the donkey had fallen on him.

"It was purely awful. I never saw anything so raw in all my life. Vince decided to milk the situation, and the bucket-man and the manager had to lift him back to the dressing room before he would admit

he was conscious. Vince was a terrible ham."

I unfolded the letter I had been holding. It had been written by a man with large hands not used to holding a pencil, so I figured it must be from a correspondent of *The Chicago Tribune*, but no, it really was from the fellow who liked to tear up money. And I had his letter.

I had read somewhere that his boxing career had been interrupted three times by prison and, if I caught the burden of the letter's complaint, it now might be truer to say his prison career had been interrupted by boxing, as one more conviction would send him to the joint for keeps and he had already committed it. The letter said so.

He was working as a bartender on a transatlantic liner, it said, and he had crossed the Atlantic seventeen times without disembarking as he didn't wish to go back to the place where the warden puts boys to bed early. Why this floating bartender felt he was better off on an ocean I don't know, as the Atlantic closes down at nine. I don't know about the Mediterranean, they may stay open all night there.

"Why," I asked the girl, "couldn't the New York police department dispatch a couple flics to climb the gangplank if the boat should make the port of New York any time other than the Jewish holidays?"

"Because the Department doesn't know Vince is at sea," she explained, "they're looking for him on dry land."

The idea of anyone looking for Vince Loman on dry land somehow struck me as slightly hilarious. "I have an idea how to get your friend loose of the law," I suggested, "have them pick up Archie Moore instead—he never goes into hiding."

The girl didn't laugh. Possibly because nothing comical had been said. And she wanted to finish her story.

"In fact, Vince wouldn't even get dressed until they had collected their twenty grand apiece. Then they had to get right out to the airport—if they had tried to get back to the hotel it would have been a pinch.

"I called the girls to bring the baggage out to the airport, and they were real good kids, they really showed up with the stuff, and it looked like the boys would make it alright but somebody tipped the customs people about all those pounds going out of the country, and they couldn't make the plane till they came clean. So Vince told the manager—right in front of the customs officers—'Give me the roll'—and handed 13,000 pounds over to the hookers and kissed them both good-

bye. That was all there was to it. Vince liked getting rid of money, that's all there was to it."

"Hemingway wrote that one up," Zane kind of boggled up.

"No," I felt obliged to correct him, "Hemingway's was about a fighter who bet fifty grand against himself. Vince only had twenty going."

"Same story all the same," he insisted, "there're six basic stories, all the rest is made up from them six."

"Where's my drink?" the girl wanted to know, but he didn't hear. He was focusing on me. I could tell, by his look, that now I was the one who kept hiding the ham on him.

"The best way to know the ins and outs of the boxing game," I informed everybody authoritatively, "is just you talk to an ex-fighter—any ex-fighter. Like once I talked to Tony Zale about his fight in Chicago with Al Hostak. When I got through he asked me if my hand had healed. He thought I was Hostak."

Zane eyed me steadily, digesting the thought piece by piece. Putting his hands on both arms of the chair, brought his chin up close.

"You're not Hostak."

"No," I told him, "I've gained weight."

The girl poked him in the side.

"Where's my drink, buddy?" She was being jocular.

Zane wasn't to be jocularized. "You've had it," he told her without unfastening his eyes from mine.

"How long does it take you to get ham and eggs?" he demanded of me.

"I get them right away because I tip so heavy," I told him talking a little over my head as I haven't tipped a waiter in years and I am not planning to begin now.

"You go for this servees compree thing?" It was a political question.
"I'm very strong against it," I assured the pinball king. After all, it isn't easy to stay on the good side of everybody when they are standing close together.

"If everybody on our side keeps adding something extra, where is it all going to end?" I asked. "Before the summer is over they'll be eating the steaks. No, we have to draw the line," I painted the picture as darkly as possible, "we can't let their side shove our side around."

Apparently it was something along these lines he had been waiting to hear.

"Buddy," he told me, "I was in the service four years, four months and eighteen days. How long were you in?"

"Long enough to be offered a promotion," I assured him, "but I didn't feel I was ready for the responsibility of Pfc."

The girl poked him again but Zane didn't feel it.

"My grandmother was a Cherokee squaw," he told me, "nobody shoves this soldier around."

"Don't apologize for your folks," I tried reassuring him, "my people weren't exactly hipsters either." I thought he had said "Cherokee square."

"Honey," the girl told him, "look out. You're talking to Solly Levitt."

I rather wished she hadn't said that. It sounded like she was trying to set something up.

He studied me again. "You're not Solly Levitt," he decided.

"Well, you're not exactly Hurricane Jackson yourself," I had to point out.

"You never whipped nobody your whole life," he informed me firmly.

"No," I had to admit, "but at one time I could have whipped Chico Veiar."

"Anybody you whipped went into a dive," he decided, and, suddenly remembering something, turned on the girl—"Vince Loman never fought a straight fight in his life," he accused her, "it's why he's in a fix now. He never made a nickel except when it was fixed. He was born in a fix."

"We're all born in a fix, baby," she told him gently, "but we're not all at sea."

That had all the earmarks of a very pointed remark, but before he could figure it out, she handed him a glass. "That last one was for Mother," she told him, "now get one for Baby."

He moved off with one shoulder higher than the other. He couldn't whip Chico Vejar either.

"Do you know why Donahue quit fighting?" I asked her just to get things going again.

"Because the Mexican died their second fight is what you're going to tell me," she told me. Schulberg wrote that one up."

"Any man who wears canvas suits can't be all bad," I defended Schulberg.

"Go see what Verina is hollering about," the girl told me, "I'm going to bed."

Verina, I judged, must be the girl wearing horn-rimmed glasses who was having trouble finding a husband for her boxer, but I didn't have to go over to where she was holding forth in order to follow her problem. Her glasses had fallen over her nose, which was pugged, giving her the aspect of a boxer herself.

Nobody was going to marry her Mimi was the general idea, and it made me wonder why the grab-the-first-thing-that-comes-along system used by people generally mightn't work out for their dogs. At any rate I was sure that if Verina let the brute off her leash for six minutes on the Rue Bucherie the problem would solve itself. Only you have to be careful about making jokes to Americans as these days they have more problems than other people.

So I just put my back against the wall and thought about all the fighters who don't fight any more. Satterfield and Zivic and Jenkins and Foster and Carl Vinciquerra and Altus Allen and Anton Radek and Johnny Colan and Booker Beckwith and Milt Aron and Davey Day and Nick Castiglione and Billy Marquart and Lem Frankin and Pete Lello and Nate Bolden and Willie Joyce and Max Marek and Leo Lomski and Johnny Bratton and Lee Oma.

Below me the river cruiser returned. The people behind the glass walls were still looking out at the couples walking the banks but there weren't many couples walking any more.

The people on the cruiser waved at the few lovers still strolling. Not one lover waved back.

Nelson Algren is a contributing editor of Contact. This piece is a section of WHO LOST AN AMERICAN?, a forthcoming Macmillan non-fiction book.

C. E. Nelson

## IN PRAISE OF THE SEASON

And in this season of which I speak there is a stripping away of vines, and lo, a marble slab lies revealed. And this is a great discovery; and the past is spoken of, and old books reread. And he who is musician to the king awakes from long despondency—again he plucks the string, and chords appear like jewels there in his slender hand.

Song: "This season of which I speak—gorgeous, barbarian—moves across the land, a glittering horde. And where it passed, the women have conceived. And thicket, and hazel bush, flecked soft with bud, enfold the thrush. And, throughout the entire earth, few think of death. And even the unusual man pauses among his women in this season of which I speak."

## PRINTS BY JOHN IHLE



They Seek a King





Homenaje a Pancho de Orellana

JOHN IHLE's animal imagery is the vocabulary of private fantasy. His first contact with unusual animals came while walking every day through the galleries of the Chicago National Museum, where he worked as a botanical illustrator in 1951. Natural science and anthropology have since played an important part in Ihle's work. Taking great liberty with the forms, he reintegrates the skeletal structure of the animal with its tactile surface into an expressive design through his own idiom of deep-etch intaglio.

Ihle's fascination with ancient civilizations has inspired many of his themes and creations. He has collected books on primitive art "just to look at"-figures of the Mayan and ancient Mexican cultures, shapes impressed on Mesopotamian clay tables, creatures of Assyrian reliefs. He has read far into the history of the Near East and other early civilizations, having so thoroughly studied the explorers of Peru that all the flora and fauna detail in the Homenaje a Pancho de Orellano are scientifically correct.

Ihle's symbolism is personal. Often, he juxtaposes two similar forms or themes. For example, his most recent series of etchings deal with the cycle of birth and decay. However, he says, "I do not try to tell a story. I title a print. People question it and want to make something up about it. I try to show some of the things I see and how I interpret them, not in a literal way, but as a visual story where there is a climax and a depth to it."

Since 1955 Ihle has taught at San Francisco State College as an Assistant Professor. At first using a segmented plate process, he began to explore the use of deep-etch intaglio printing. Introducing fresh visual excitement into the medium, he developed rich relief surfaces, color and tonal nuances, so that once-flat backgrounds began to expand dimensionally.

With an increased technical vocabulary, Ihle has worked towards freer forms. Between etchings, he has begun to draw in a rapid painterly manner using a combination of shellac, asphaltin, pigment, and paint thinner. The results have been bold spontaneous abstractions still basically inspired by animal and natural forms.

Orange Temple



Mother and Atomic Child



Battle at Acre

## ELEVEN POEMS

## INNER COUNTRY

Into the familiar country
We come as strangers
Reclaiming the landscape slowly
In the restless winds.
Recovering from visions
Harbored like disease,
We feel the beating of wings against our hands.

We come hesitant to the land To which we are permitted With the signs between mountains, Like temples showing their high windows. In this country fog lessens And the dark settles in pools Yielding a reflection.

## IN PINE TREES

The pine trees
Stiff needles in the morning.
The fog has made a rain
That falls like white sun.

Fog that fitted in the limbs at night Draws up against needles. The prismed drops Caught in the crotch of branches Make pins of color.

Down below
People like rigid animals
Have unhaired themselves with clothes,
But the sun enters
Warming their odors out.
Can the danced impulse shrug away its cell
When the fallen fog gleams in the coiffure?

#### SUMMER

Round and fruited summer A copied sea of garnets Whitened in the juiceless grass.

The risen water
Folded like thin stalks of emerald
Between guttered bark,
The man stooping
Catching the horns of his fingers between live seed.
He moves with a salty whistle,
His voice rasps like the toothed tongues of birds.

A woman rising like a blown sea
Rotates the weeds of her skirts
With the slow motion of rivers.
The man straightens slowly
Watching her gentle motion,
Then with his knees spreading wide the thick grain
He walks in the hot air.
She turns to meet his coming with her dark stone eyes.
Their voices fling among bird cries
And the shade receives them.
The gardens thicken, their hedges color
The sun splits in half like a goblet of peach.
The air is an odor of fruit.

## LOVE

Love, ricochets as light Like pure snow emblazoned. Its white trembles As though with internal winds, Kaleidescopic air.

Then like tentacles of sun,
Yellowed through blue air, comes
A graceless infection of heat,
Disturbing, inconsistent,
But lying along that pure unyellowed light
Like the grooved warmth of thigh;
Gently exposing the sprouted earth,
And the little uncovered beetle,
Finally disappearing in the chime of the white night.

Then again it is light,
Like fingers in a waxen morning
That comes spontaneously,
First separating the pure landscapes,
Then absorbing them darkly,
In the raucous and delighted
Integration of love.

#### DEVOURED

Devoured! Bitten at the eyes!
Caught with mouth-tight fiction. Like a beast
These irresolute contemplations prowl
Through chambers of the breath,
Storming their straining spaces
Unreproached for fear.
But never by intention recognized during the slaying wur.

Shall I first eat my love or stoop
To beg my flesh be all consumed!
In this reciprocation turn once more
To rise in restless hunger like a sea
That leaks its bottom out to fill the sky
And sucks its filling from reflected clouds.
Oh, recognize the slaying of that beast
Fallen to fill the moat that leaks that sea.

## HOW DO YOU SEE THE SPRING?

How does the sun Float the once sunken day Up from its gloomed monotony Of greyed green so suddenly?

Under the springs heel Rain trodden ankle deep grasses Glistening with webbed light And the brushsoft brush of wind.

How do you see the spring?

Does it lie in your bones and green

The tender muscle dancing high

As the tall rising thrust between limbs of trees?

Is it told to us both together Tensed through our urgent senses Of green spring taut in the bloods rush Like a hive of bees all singing To a wingless flight.

I see the sense of spring rolled down Tearless and fruitless about you, And I shake with containment Of my green, unshaped, Unleafed, unblossomed bursting.

#### LESSON

Once were the summers all the still flight Of wingless birds ironed on the sky. But in this horizons wheel, spokeless and vast, Pierced the flung spear. Then must birds regain the strength of wings, Ranging the whole of heaven to escape Those shadowed arrow hawks of memory.

Mine was my love in summer of white sun Voiceless with vision, Then was my love flung Lost like a scarf of water in the stream That poured its raining chaos down the sky And stung in separate deaths again to me.

Wings of a tranquil summer choose to rest Until in fierce attack They fall through empty acres of the sky, Breaking their death among the bitter leaves And rouse in darkness echoes of their wings. Here empty sunlight spills between the shade And fills the living struggle with a dream.

## NO FRUIT OF EARTH IS SNOW

White humped bodyless Small trees like sheeted dwarfs Over the internal darkness of their skeletons.

Clutches of snow leaned to each other With the urgency of people. The powdering fall drifts through sun like dust.

Shivering fur crystals drawn by the nights chill Out of the moistened day.

Flocks of snow weight limbs with their fruitless burden. The white form mimics the long hard limbs

Nestles in exact fit,

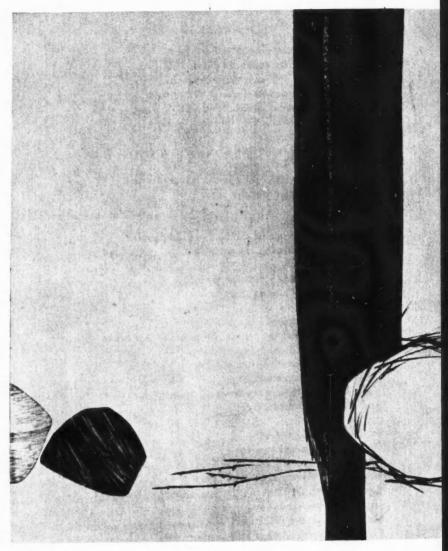
Like a ghost tree come down upon each branch.

What is the restful burden? A dream

Hovered in loveliness, a ghost of light.

But here no fruit forms, here no seed,
No demand, no hunger, sucking from the trunk its fill:
No incessant labor distracting every dream
To fill earth again with fat full fruit
And leave the trees bedraggled with success.

No fruit of earth is snow But laid so quietly against the winter shape Slips softly down to feed itself to roots.



Kett

Space Song

Courtesy the Gallery, Mill Valley

## YOUTH SANG HER

She rose, spooling the yarn of her laughter
Round and round, life tucked in the threads of her pockets,
And spilled loose, encompassing her earth.
Youth sang her, broad as the field of her voice,
Deep as the rain tilled and the cold well of water.
The sun rose in her warm as the smell of birth.

She surrounded her tasks like a lamp and submerged them. Her man straightened and buried his hands upon her, Finding himself a ship, hard in the restless waters. Their young tumbled against them, Sucking the tide of her milk.

But the years rose against the backs of children.
They went still suffering the dreams of their childhood
But lost of its faith.
Slowly their business construed them
To draw its walls around them.

She saw this change like a shadow,
But her hands went on casting the loaves of her bread
And she made this confident offering.
The sun came down against the trees
Loosening the cool grove.
Their days rose among the musk of morning
And set lightly over the river.

In the fields of brown sun,
Warm as the rind of summer
After the death of a son and the births of generations,
In a world grown flexible with rain,
She went into the field for the horses
And fell among them.
He looked out and found her
Her mouth open and her eyes bewildered.

They took her like a broken tool, and hid Her weakness in a bed. For five years of days she could not enter. She saw the light go from her husband, And his strength sift from his bones; For the first time, his eyes hungered.

One morning she selected a time
And calling her husband took his hands and kissed them.
"The house is old and the repairs endless
But look, there the sun is,
In the air it is as white as a star.
The earth rouses as though a water had passed over it."
Then turning her face against his hands,
She gave him the strength left her,
That his hope might not drain him of living.
They took her and buried her
Loosely as a seed
In a hillside of pine trees.

#### GRIEF

What loss lies in the rigid brains of birds Grey claws between twigs of juiceless leaves Holding, holding, shining where they curve. The mate unreturned, Or the quiet form that will not rise and fly.. Behind the black eye circle tearless, The unrelenting memory listens And the air shakes the sun. A creature stirs among the fallen leaves Then soundless the birds unhesitating plunge.

## I SANG MY HARP

I sang my harp on the sun's deck Here at the water in the cool unblossomed year, And the light notes clung at my hair roots Like bird cries gathering.

All the day's time leaned Into lengthening shadows And moments clung like fresh leaves On water.

Wind crossed the pond Leaving stripes and crosses As though it rolled and cast down, Cast down its shape for vision.

Wisteria hung for lavender In a blossom of perfume, And on the stone a toad Settled in sunlight.

Is this saturation of senses enough? Living together between a time frame, We creature and non-creature And I among them.

## THE POETRY OF FRANCES CRARY

WITH THIS GROUP of poems by Frances Crary Contact introduces a a new voice. What is immediately remarkable—what is powerfully disarming—is the sense that she is a poet without evasions, that she uses a highly colored language not for purposes of Art, but because she does indeed perceive the world vividly. Brilliant metaphor is, for her, the natural mode of expression, never a contrivance aiming at effect. She is an artist, certainly deliberate, but directed by the elegance of her perceptions and the depth of her feeling, not by the demands of artifice.

The sturdy substratum of these poems is a metaphorical correspondence between the outer world of natural phenomena and an inner world of love, fear, loss, and joy. Since both are measured by some standard of achievable perfection, of difficult but natural fulfillment, the result is human rather than melodramatic. These poems pursue, a merely imaginable happiness, "the raucous and delighted/Integration of love," not transfiguration. For even at its worst life brings "those strange/Hard nourishments of change."

Instinctively—she seems to have had no choice in the matter—Frances Crary seeks the purposes which Wallace Stevens called "the purposes of the pure poet": she renders as vividly as she can the actual experience of experience. She lives on a beautiful small ranch near St. Helena in the country to which she is devoted and which she celebrates; she teaches school nearby. She is quite believably the author of these poems.

## MART OF ADDENDA

SOBBE sits alone on the floor of the stage. There is nothing around him. He is relaxed and contemplative as if he spent long hours this way. A thin column of smoke rises from a pipe he holds, however we never see him draw upon it. Enter a camera clad couple, MR. & MRS. BOTCXS.

#### SOBBE

Good afternoon, may we help you?

BOTCXS

Oh hello . . . No, I'm sorry, we thought this was a— Well the sign says, 'Mart of Addenda.' We were shopping and supposed this was a store . . . or something. We're tourists. I'm sorry, we didn't mean to intrude.

SOBBE

But you were quite right to enter. This a mart as the sign says.

BOTCXS

But there's nothing here.

SOBBE

Our merchandise is elsewhere.

BOTCXS

In what do you deal?

SOBBE

Won't you be seated.

BOTCXS

(He sits on floor)

Thank you.

MRS. BOTCXS

Dear, my skirt's too tight.

BOTCXS

What? Oh, of course. Sorry. My wife's skirt's too tight.

#### SOBBE

A pity. Then she won't wish to join us. What is your name, sir?

BOTCXS

I was already down dear. We'll only stay a minute or so—Excuse me? Oh yes, our names. We're Mr. and Mrs. Botcxs.

#### MRS. BOTCXS

(Giggles)

It's spelt B-O-T-C-X-S. Different generations in our family have chosen to emphasize different of the final consonants in pronunciation. We chose to emphasize the S.

#### SOBBE

Might ask, for what reason did your wife giggle?

## BOTCXS

Well, it's a nervous habit she has whenever we are introduced. SOBBE

Of course.

## BOTCXS

And would your name be the one I noticed upon the sign, Sobe?

SOBBE

Sobbe, that's correct.

## BOTCXS

We're glad to meet you Mr. Sobbe.

SOBBE

Have you come far?

#### BOTCXS

Oh my yes. My wife and I are indefatigable travelers. Take for instance today. We've already covered nearly— Yes dear? Of course, forgive me. The fact is, Mr. Sobbe, as my wife points out there's still quite a bit of ground for us to cover. For that reason we'd better be going. You were just going to tell us in what merchandise you traded.

#### SOBBE

That is why you came in.

## BOTCXS

Well yes—I mean we try to look in as many places as possible to see if there's anything we might like to buy.

#### SOBBE

Ordinarily you pay cash.

## BOTCXS

Yes. Actually we usually give traveler's checks. Why?

SOBBE

Here we exchange.

BOTCXS

Oh. I see. Rather than cash?

That's correct.

MRS. BOTCXS

My feet hurt, dear.

BOTCXS

Just be a moment more! And it always works out as an even trade Mr. Sobbe?

SOBBE

Oh yes, more or less.

BOTCXS

I keep forgetting to ask you exactly what it is that you deal in?

SOBBE

Well Mr. Botcxs, our trade is ordinarily on a wholesale level—MRS, BOTCXS

But what!? What is it you sell or exchange or whatever you do for heaven's sake?

BOTCXS

My wife's gotten a little excited, so I think we'd better go. But I have been wondering myself, what it was you dealt in.

SOBBE

Parts of people.

BOTCXS

Oh.

MRS. BOTCXS

You mean like artificial limbs?

Not exactly.

MRS. BOTCXS

Teeth? Glass eyes? Things like that?

SOBBE

SOBBE

No, not really. As I said—we exchange.

MRS. BOTCXS

Please, let's go.

BOTCXS

If you want to, go outside and wait dear and I'll be there in a minute,

but first I'd like to find what this is about. You say you exchange parts of people? New organs for diseased organs?—although I don't see how that's possible.

SOBBE

Rather than diseased, I'd say full for empty, empty for full.

BOTCXS

That sounds like stomachs.

SOBBE

Exactly. And souls and minds. These are our three commodities.

BOTCXS

But how? Souls . . .

MRS. BOTCXS

Please come dear!

BOTCXS

No wait a minute—I see. You don't mean literally a stomach. Ha Ha. It's all right dear. He doesn't mean literally. Very good gimmick Mr. Sobbe, very good. You gave us a mild shock and also you kept our interest. It's some sort of a religion or something dear. That's very imaginative. Here all the time we were thinking that you meant the real thing, I mean stomachs and so forth—Well, I guess we'll be shoving off. This is your meeting hall then?

SOBBE

Yes.

BOTCXS

Well, glad to have met you. We wish you all kinds of luck. The world sure needs saving. Bye.

SORRE

Goodbye.

BOTCXS

Just a second dear. There was one thing that puzzled me, and I just thought I'd ask before we left . . .

SOBBE

Go right ahead.

**BOTCXS** 

When speaking of exchanging right now you mentioned empty for full also, didn't you?

SOBBE

That's correct.

## BOTCXS

Even figuratively speaking, I don't suppose you mean that you would give someone an empty stomach for a full one.

#### SOBBE

Occasionally that is the result of an exchange.

## BOTCXS

I'm confused again.

#### SOBBE

You will recall that we handle three commodities?

#### BOTCXS

Yes but-I still don't see.

## SOBBE

Since our only basis of dealing is that of exchange, then it should be clear how the example you mentioned quite naturally occurs.

#### BOTCXS

You mean that somebody gives up a full something or other in order to get a full something else?

#### SOBBE

That's right.

## BOTCXS

But it sounds stupid and incredible.

#### SOBBE

Nevertheless that's how it is. We simply act as broker. By keeping tabs on what is being demanded over here say, we are able to put the parties involved in touch with a compatible request over there. That's all.

#### BOTCXS

For a commission?

#### SORRE

Naturally.

#### BOTCXS

Now just a minute. I can't say that I understand what you do or how you do it, but there are lots of people who don't need you because they have nice full supplies of all three things.

#### SOBBE

Not possible here. That's why we're in business.

### BOTCXS

Now wait! Wait! Take my wife and I for instance-

#### SOBBE

With pleasure.

#### BOTCXS

We're well off. We've full stomachs as you would say.

#### SOBBE

These things are not absolute, but what you say appears to be relatively correct.

#### BOTCXS

Yes. Well now, my wife is no great thinker of course but I have a very active mind.

#### SOBBE

All right.

## BOTCXS

What was the third? Oh yes, soul! I would say Mrs. Botcxs on the other hand has more of that than—

(MRS. BOTCXS has begun to giggle)

Dear, I'm trying to get to the bottom of this. Stop that will you! Stop that giggling! That was no introduction, I just said that you—Excuse us a second Mr. Sobbe. Listen now, I've told you that if you don't learn to control this, that one day I'll—

(He shakes her. She eyes him fearfully but only laughs louder)

Get hold of yourself! Forgive us Mr. Sobbe, but this will just take a minute. Stop it! For God's sake, I've put up with this long enough. Either you're going to get hold of yourself or else—!

(She is laughing wildly)

Stop it!

(He slaps her. She is silent)

I'm sorry dear. I'm sorry I slapped you but now once and for all let's get to the bottom of it. Why do you do this? Why, eh?

(He waits. For a moment she holds her breath regarding him in silence)

Please, tell me why?

(Suddenly she is off on another jag of hysterical laughing, all the while watching him with growing terror. In a moment he begins beating her in earnest)

Stupid! Brainless bitch! So you won't stop, eh? Well I'll stop you!

Stop! Stop it! Stop that! Stop!
(She is silent. She lies in a heap
on the floor. SOBBE has remained as
he was, not even fully turning to

follow the action. MR. BOTCXS shrugs and moves toward SOBBE with

shrugs and moves toward SOBBE wit a sheepish smile)

I can't think why I did that. Guess I felt like it.

#### SOBBE

Yes. There's just one thing. May we have your name once again for our records?

#### BOTCXS

Certainly. It's Botcxs. B-O-T... (He giggles) ... C... (More giggling) Excuse me... X-S. (He giggles again) And that was my wife. (BOTCXS goes to pick up the body)

#### SOBBE

That's all right Mr. Botcxs, we'll keep the body. It's our customary fee.

## **BOTCXS**

Certainly, certainly. Then I'll just go along?

SOBBE

Certainly. Goodbye, Mr. Botcxs.

## BOTCXS

## Goodbye.

(He starts off. SOBBE hasn't moved. We hear BOTCXS giggle)

#### CURTAIN

Kenneth Dewey is a 27-year-old graduate of the Columbia University Drama School. Two of his one-act plays have been produced at the International House in New York City. Mr. Dewey was in charge of *The Birthday Party* during the first year of its record-breaking American premiere. He is a resident of San Francisco and has stage managed for the R. G. Davis Mime Troupe and is currently engaged in experimental projects with Ann Halprin's Dance Workshop.

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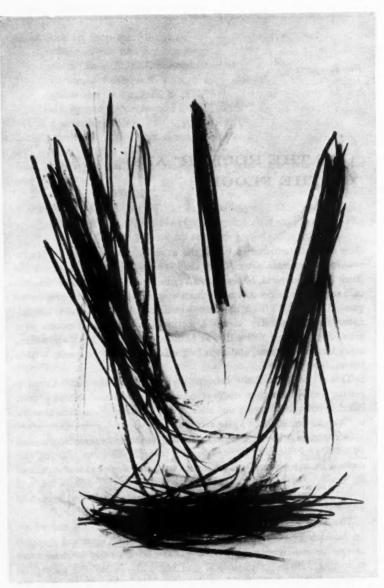
# "OFF THE ROCKER" AND "ON THE FLOOR"

Our official homicidal types, the generals, are cooking up bright, murderous schemes again. This time it's the Chemical Corps of the Army, with chemical, biological and radiological warfare. The "chemical" means gas, especially a fascinating spring collection of new nerve gases. Let's take a look at them—we'll save the other two exterminators for another day. Here's a picture: the millions of people in a great city — asleep or awake, at home or abroad — suddenly stiffen, every last one of them, and then fall, unable to move or speak. Within ten minutes they die.

This is just one of the intriguing schemes the Chemical Corps is getting ready. Another displays a whole population abruptly gone blind, groping and crying out toward one another . . . as the meaning of "human being" once again recedes.

Nerve gases will also produce deafness, convulsions, mindless terror, amnesia, and suicide. They can destroy co-ordination and balance, can make a man weep or froth at the mouth, can degenerate the cells of his brain, can make him vomit or giggle. They can destroy his will power, make his hair stand on end, give him a fever and turn him into a schizophrenic.

The Chemical Corps says the gases are "humane." Of the effects on humans Lt. Col. Douglas Lindsey, director of chemical research at the Army Chemical Center, says, "We refer loosely to these types of incapacitation—psychological and physical—as 'off the rocker' on one hand and 'on the floor' on the other." He adds, "It is not neces-



Julius Wasserstein

sary to drive a man completely off the rocker to incapacitate him psychologically."

But limited public enthusiam for gas warfare has piqued Chemical Corps officers. Concerning the present U.S. policy not to use gas except in retaliation, Maj. Gen. William M. Creasy, former Chief Chemical Officer, says it "puts the military planner in a kind of nevernever land. This is a crime against the U.S. soldier." The former commander of Chemical Corps research, Brig. Gen. J. H. Rothchild, says, "We must reject once and for all the position that the enemy can have the first chemical or biological blow wherever or whenever he wishes. We must make it clear that we consider these weapons among the normal usable means of war."

"Too often," General Creasy explains, "logical considerations have been clouded by the concept that such methods of waging war are too horrible to contemplate." He agrees that "they are horrible, as are all means of killing our fellow man. War, however waged, is horrible." But he finds a silver lining: "We must remember that 'horrible' is a relative term. While these forms of warfare do produce illness, suffering, or death, a selection can be made by the user." He has coined the phrase "nerve discombobulators" to describe these gases.

Gen. Rothchild states the case for lethal gases this way: "It is probable we will want to kill. There is no glossing over the fact that men must die in war. Taking care of a large number of sick enemy soldiers would take too many of our own men out of action."

Gases also have the military advantage of leaving everything but the people intact—factories, machinery, roads, supplies, houses, stores, everything.

But then what is the purpose of war in the first place? Just what is the big idea? If the enemy is only stunned, and his land and goods are left intact, how does he know he's been beaten? Can there really be any other purpose than nihilism in a war? Kill or smash an enemy, tear up his land—and at least he's safe for a while (as with Germany, about ten years). Are we going to change the purpose of war so that an aggressor merely plans to occupy the enemy's land, leaving it as rich as ever? Occupying a defeated country is really not such a pleasant task (as who knows better than Americans?) and defeated or not, the enemy will be right back where he (and you) started if he has all his factories intact. How can you call that winning a War of Material Goods or a War of Standards of Living? And even if you

persist in calling it an Ideological War, what do you think you've won by occupying? Does the presence of foreign troops change the thinking of those occupied?

As a matter of fact, the enemy might well never even believe you when you tell him he lost. One psychologist points out that a person recovering from nerve gas might find his ego strengthened. If the victim has successfully negotiated the gas-produced psychosis, he may be more "alive" than ever. While you're paying for the occupation, he goes back to his work with renewed vigor.

Gen. Rothchild says the gases "work by destroying the connections between the nerve endings and the muscles the nerve endings control. Since the muscles can contract but not relax, the result is an eventual

paralysis of the respiratory system."

However, Gen. Creasy thinks some nerve-gas victims could be saved. According to him: "A city is prepared with atropine syrettes, and its rescue workers are trained in the back-pressure arm-lift method of artificial respiration." (What rescue workers?) And he adds: This new method of respiration "induces more fresh air into the lungs." (What fresh air?) "If atropine can be injected into the victim within thirty seconds after the first symptoms appear, it will help." (This would be about as useful as a fifteen-minute warning to evacuate New York. All you have to do is to go to the medicine chest, watch in hand, and rummage through the argyrol, mercurochrome, Geritol and tranquilizers...)

Gen. Creasy is in favor of arming the G.I., who "carries the injection capsule around with him and drives it into the thigh muscle of his leg, right through his dirty pants or whatever he has on." On the other hand, Col. Lindsey evidently doubts the effectiveness of antidotes: "The fact that we have this antidote does not militate against the effectiveness of [gas] in the field. You cannot make every enemy soldier a physician to diagnose his own illness and carry on his own treatment."

Gen. Creasy does admit that the antidote "sometimes has a tendency to collapse a lung." Dr. Bernard P. McNamara, chief of the Chemical Warfare Laboratories toxicology division, speaking of one antidote used on a dog remarked that the dog "will not be completely recovered." And he goes on: "Actually, although this antidote removes the paralysis, a man who had the antidote would still be incapacitated mentally because the antidote itself affects the mentality. It causes

drowsiness and confusion. So the antidote would not make a person treated fit for combat or fit for active duty." Of another antidote, chlorprozamine, Paul Hoch, New York State Commissioner of Public Health, says that it is "interpreted by some as a chemical lobotomy."

So much then for the antidotes. (By the way, when asked "Do you have something that makes people smarter?" Dr. McNamara replied: "I'm afraid not."

Gen. Creasy, in addition to his interest in gases, remains a firm believer in nuclear weapons. "I would say, you select one, two, or three targets, or maybe ten, in Russia, and you announce to the world: If you are going to continue building atomic bombs, and if you do thus and so, we will drop these atomic bombs, and mean it."

Congressman Joseph E. Karth of Minnesota asked him, "Would you go so far as to say to them, and mean it, if they start any small fires, irrespective of where it might be, these are the four places you would bomb?"

Gen. Creasy: "I would. Yes, that is probably one of the reasons I will never be Secretary of State."

Thus, gases appear to be just one more item the generals want to stock up alongside all the other deadly junk we're spending our taxes on. Miraculously, gases have stayed banned for over thirty years. But on this point the generals remain unconvinced: What's the harm, they repeat, as long as the victim recovers? An official fact sheet from the Chief Chemical Officer argues in favor of gases: "In an area containing mixed friendly and enemy personnel, people can be incapacitated, and while in this state, a separation can be made, the friendly population recovers; the enemy finds himself in a prison compound." But who will still be friendly after having been knocked "on the floor" or "off the rocker?" How will that "separation" work?

Will it be friend from foe, or living from dead? Or just dead from dead?

One view on this "humane" weapon comes from Congressman Robert Kastenmeier of Wisconsin: "The generals talk about psychochemicals which make cowards out of brave men and vice versa, while causing temporary madness in the population. The horror of a population stricken with mass madness is a strange conception of humanity."

Let's look closely at the way these gases work. Gen. Creasy said at a hearing, "If the psychochemicals we are talking about were administered to the people in this room, the people in the room would not

know it. It would only be the outsider who came in who would find things unusual. I mean you would not think it is at all peculiar to see Mr. [Congressman Gordon L.] McDonough dancing on the desk. You would probably get up and join him. And I would probably clap." When asked if he had tried out the gases on Congress, Gen. Creasy replied: "The Chemical Corps has not found it necessary to do it up until now."

Gases can be delivered by aircraft spray, aerial bombs, ground munitions, guided missiles, or simply by sabotaging the local water or food supply. A briefcase near a ventilator in the Pentagon could "cause the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary of Defense, and all their assistants to lose their sense of reality for hours," according to one expert. Gases can be inhaled or can attack through the skin. Gen. Creasy says a man could pull a little red wagon with a gas generator in it all around a NIKE base and knock out everyone inside. The drugs could also go into coffee, could be boiled. At a recent hearing Congressman James Fulton of Pennsylvania reflected on these possibilities: "Really, some foreign enemy could already be subjecting us in the U.S. to such things and we would not know it. Are we under it now? Are we the rabbits and guinea pigs? I don't know."

Maj. Gen. Marshall Stubbs, present Chief Chemical Officer, says, "Through our industrial liaison program we are receiving about four hundred potential compounds a month from pharmaceutical houses. The characteristics we are looking for in these agents are in general exactly opposite to what the pharmaceutical firms want in drugs—that is, the undesirable side effects."

Two major groups of nerve gases are being studied. The Chemical Corps says little about the newest group, called the G gases, except that they are stronger than the better-known lysergic acid diethylamide group (LSD). The difference between a lethal dose and an incapacitating dose of these gases lies in the quantity that gets into your system. The gases would just temporarily drive you out of your mind, and not kill you, only if the dose were not too high. Thus, the "humaneness" of the gases depends on such imponderables as the quality of a general's algebra, the direction of the wind, the depth of a reservoir, or the efficiency of an air-conditioning system, which might blow more than your proper share of gas right into your face.

Ohio State Penitentiary inmates, Seventh Day Adventists, soldiers, and Chemical Corps scientists themselves are among volunteers testing

the effects of nerve gases. Gen. Creasy says that Dr. M. Van Sim, chief of the clinical research division of the Chemical Warfare Laboratories, "became a guinea pig. He was no longer the head of a laboratory, he was just a little boy in a cage." Dr. Van Sim himself said, "you do lose your will. One of the compounds will stress a person very rapidly if he is placed in isolation. He is very easy to interrogate. So the problem of its covert use, and its use in interrogations, are certainly being worked on with a great deal of interest."

"To the general public," writes Gen Rothchild, "these weapons are particularly mysterious and indecent—so awful and sinister, in fact, that they have not been used in recent wars. This impression is very wrong." Let's see how wrong—let's examine more closely the effects on the human mind of one of the gases, LSD. Dr. Charles Savage, psychiatrist at the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Md., reports of a volunteer who had taken the drug:

"He had left his body and was floating on a cloud. He was on a barge floating down the Nile with slaves rowing the barge. This idyll did not persist. He had to get up to change a record. When he did so he found he was surrounded with a blinding haze. He felt as though he were wrapped around with gauze and that an electric field insulated him from the rest of the world. He could barely change the record. He felt that he was being sucked into the machine. He was then faced with the fact that he was completely unable to shake off the effect, that he was overwhelmed by it, that he had lost control, and that he was totally incapacitated. He developed the illusion that his thoughts were being broadcast to the world."

Dr. Savage then quoted the patient:

"I heard a noise, thought it was the repair man coming to replace me. I thought I heard the repair cart. Somebody's going through my pockets. They turned on this machine to shake me. I'll put my watch back on, and prove I'm not crazy, that this whole thing is a plot to get me to talk. The third degree. Having the truth shaken out of me. This is broadcasting all over the world. All right, I'll talk; you don't have to beat it out of me anymore. It certainly is a good torture device, being hooked up to a mind-reading outfit, thoughts being broadcast to the whole world."

The symptoms were those of schizophrenia. For a week the patient

was afraid to go to bed lest someone overhear him talk in his sleep. A person already in a state of anxiety (such as people in a war) would have an even stronger reaction. Tested in groups, volunteers were more cheerful and often acted out repressed impulses: one Army captain is reported to have flicked a general's nose with his finger and to have told him to go to hell. The general forthwith asked the scientist in charge of the testing: "Are you sure that captain got any of the nerve gas?"

Patients said they needed another person with them: "Your physical reality disappears, and then your body disappears, and you have only another person, and something gets between you and the other person, and you're cut off from the only thing that can save you," one said. Dr. Abraham Hoffer, director of psychiatric research for the Province of Saskatchewan, writes, "A very serious psychologist under influence of LSD merely sat and giggled for two hours. One subject felt he was seven beings at one time." Dr. Harry A. Abramson of Mt. Sinai Hospital, New York, reports: "One subject developed a process grossly resembling a paranoid psychosis when he went alone to the men's room." Dr. Savage writes of a woman who became suicidal under LSD; he had to stay with her for eighteen hours.

For what it may be worth, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev has said of gas warfare: "We hold that their use runs counter to human principles, the rules of international law, and the conscience of all peoples."

But according to General Lyman Lemnitzer, Army Vice Chief of Staff: "Intelligence reports indicate that the Sino-Soviet bloc has substantial chemical munitions and that its stockpile contains most modern types of agents." General Stubbs says that over thirty million Russians have already been trained in chemical warfare defense.

The White House has not been quoted on the subject, but former Secretary of Defense Neil McElroy made a statement that may do as well: "We have a program which is costing quite a substantial amount of money, as you well know, but it is distinctly possible that it ought to be bigger or smaller, as I look at it."

The U.S. Army has a mask against all known chemical agents that attack the lungs; as for the kinds that go through the skin—they're working on it. Gen. Creasy, demonstrating one of the masks at a hearing, said: "I could wear this to play golf, fire a NIKE missile and do any other job that a soldier has to do." Later he added: "This thing,

whether you want to admit it, you do slobber if you wear one of these things."

Since ventilators in atomic shelters would draw in the gas during a chemical attack, new devices are being tested. There is, for instance, the coffin-shaped "infant protector," made with "semi-clear plastic for vision," and there are shelters of "diffusion board" which are supposed to let in the air while filtering out the gas. Gen. Creasy says, "In the target city, family shelters would be lined with it." Thus the prospects are picking up. With masks, infant protectors, diffusion board and a dose of atropine in the bathroom cabinet, we can venture into the atomic shelters, which have already been stocked with a 3-week supply of canned food and canned water.

Meanwhile, the Chemical Corps continues to broaden our horizon. Walter Schneir, a medical writer, stated in *The Reporter* that at "Rocky Mountain Arsenal, near Denver, where the gas was manufactured until recently, there have been more than eight hundred industrial casualities in the past six years, some of them fatal."

Still, the generals go their way. Of course we can't expect the generals to quit, the Department of Defense to close down. But we can stop them from building any more suicidal contraptions. We might even find a place for the money elsewhere. Chemical warfare, according to Senator Hubert Humphrey, is costing us just about what we spend on international health programs.

Roy Bongartz has been living in Europe for the past two years, working on a non-fiction book for Doubleday and on a novel, for which he received a Mary Roberts Rinehart work-in-progress award. He was on the staff of the New Yorker for several years. His work has appeared in various national magazines, including the New Yorker, Mademoiselle, and The Nation. A play, The Applicant, had its premiere in London the last week of September.

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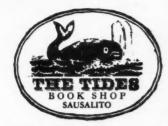
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#### THE SIBLING

MARGUERITE DIDN'T MIND in the least being what she was, perhaps because she was indifferent to boys. She did her work cheerfully and humbly, sewing for a living in a little house on the edge of town. The boys were not indifferent to her, though. They pestered her and hooted and whistled when she walked down the street, they drew symbols on her door, they threw rocks at her house. Their reason for persecuting her was very simple: She had a remarkably sweet and pretty face which attracted them too far in view of the fact that she had a big hump on her back. Anyone who loved such a person would have some tall explaining to do. Parents would say: "A pretty face is not enough, but a hump is too much." So the boys hated her, rather as if she had been a gentle, pretty boy. The girls hated her because she was an orphan (some people have all the luck) and because she did not do what they would have done if they had been orphans. The adults despised her because she never asked for charity, never seemed to need anything they had-was not even lonely! "How can such a creature be unlonely!" they snorted. "Even we are lonely! Who does she think she is, a society unto herself?"

The priest disliked her because he suspected her of withholding important information from him during confession; nevertheless it was his duty to give her spiritual guidance. "Living in a nightmare world is not as bad as people think," he said kindly. "Being a world, it contains good and evil; where the good is relative, naturally the evil is relative too." Marguerite knew how to get along in her world. She

was astute, she was well adjusted, she knew how to find the areas of lesser discomfort, to play one horror off against another.

All was as it should be, until the beautiful stranger came to town. He had a mass of kinky, golden hair, and the enormous, dark, self-absorbed eyes of a baby giraffe, tall and shapely he was, and he wore carnival clothes of a sort that would have landed him in jail immediately had not the police hit on the idea of keeping him under surveillance in order to catch him at something still worse. His name was Paris. The women hated him. The men hated him. Everybody hated him—except Marguerite. From the morning she caught him gazing at the symbols which the boys had chalked on her door during the night, she loved him. The rapture on his face had filled her with rapture.

What is one to do under such circumstances? One goes to the doctor. Marguerite had never been to the doctor, although several people had urged her to do so—even the priest, his mortal enemy. The priest hated him for disseminating free information about birth control, drinking, atheism and the like, for giving advice and for being otherwise charitable outside the Church.

"If that despicable man rids you of your hump so that you can live contrary to God's wishes," said the priest, "he will pay for it in the hereafter. If he tries and fails, he will be ruined in this world as well, even if he escapes hanging. Finally, as a result of all this, it seems quite possible to me that you may have a baby. I can see that man's chagrin! I cannot help thinking that the moral which I shall point out afterwards will outweigh the actual harm done. Go ahead, Marguerite, consult him."

Thick, heavy snow lay over the countryside, over the town, beautifying everything except the grotesque hump of a girl in love. Pulling her unusually long, warm shawl about her shoulders, she trudged down the street to the ramshackle house where the doctor had his office. The man of science sat behind his desk, drawing venomous little faces on his fingernails with a fountain pen. After a moment he glanced at Marguerite, put the pen down, grabbed a sheaf of papers and muttered:

"I'm a busy man."

"I realize that," Marguerite faltered, "and I wouldn't have bothered you—if it weren't for—"

"Well, what is it—some sort of disgusting female thing, or do you have a cough?"

"Neither, sir. It's-"

"Nerves, or I miss my guess." The doctor stood up, chuckled, started to pat her on the back, then thought better of it.

"It's this hump," she mumbled, tugging ineffectually at both ends of her shawl.

The doctor wagged his head, sighed and sat down.

"You are dissatisfied with it?"

"Oh no, sir, not dissatisfied exactly—but I was wondering—would it be possible—could you make it, perhaps, just a trifle less conspicuous?"

"I suppose the priest put you up to this," he said, and for a moment he looked as if he were going to cry. "I am not unfamiliar with his methods. He knows that such an operation is impossible under the primitive conditions I have to work with in this godforsaken town. If I send you to Copenhagen, he can say that I am trying to get you out of the way, to disembarrass myself. If I take you there myself, he will say that I am seducing you, or that in spite of all my medical knowledge, I have already planted a foetus somewhere in your genito-urinary mechanism. If, on the other hand, I should perform the impossible—"

"You will!" Marguerite said with a kind of irrational joy that upset the poor doctor still further.

"—then he will hold me responsible for the immoral life you will undoubtedly lead in order to make up for the time you have lost because of this hump, to which you owe your chastity."

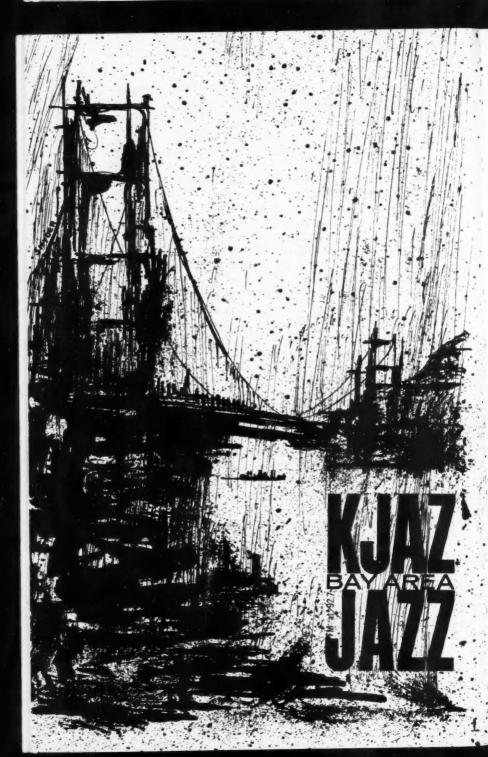
"I swear to you-"

"Swear me no oaths," he said wearily. "Do you want to perjure yourself before an atheist? If I fail, you will die. . . . Why are you smiling? The operation is illegal in this province. I shall be hanged and publicly castigated, and I shall probably deserve it."

"The priest did say something of the sort," she murmured, "but he takes a great deal for granted. I think that you are right and he is wrong. There is no God."

The doctor stared at her pensively for a long moment, then he took a pencil from his coat pocket and began cleaning his nails with the sharp lead point. They got blacker and blacker. The little faces he had drawn on them glared around with renewed intensity.

"Tell me," he said, "is there some particular man whom you wish to attract, or will any man do? There are men in the world who have precisely your type of affliction, and although their problem is not often conducive to dispositions as sweet as yours—ah, then!" Mar-



guerite was in tears. "So it is some particular man! What is his name?"

"Paris," said Marguerite.

"Ugh! That one! It is for him that you wish to undergo this unusually revolting operation?"

"For him I would do anything—anything! Life would not be worth living without him. He has looked at me with compassion."

"I understand perfectly," the doctor said, "and although I am not a religious man, I find myself barely able to forgive you for such a blunder. Paris is no good."

"But he is good! He is! He is Truth, Beauty, and Goodness!"

"You poor child, Paris is hopelessly auto-erotic."

"Then I will help him-I know I can!"

"No, you can't. He doesn't want you, doesn't need you, doesn't need anybody."

"Perhaps you're a little jealous of his independence, doctor?" She asked cunningly.

"Jealous of Narcissus?"

"Ah, Narcissus," she sighed. "He loved the pool for the beauty he saw reflected in it, and the pool loved him for the beauty it saw reflected in his eyes. The beauty of the pool and the beauty of Narcissus—they were the same. They were never separated, those two. When he died—"

"Never mind finishing the myth," the doctor said irritably. "I see you have learned a thing or two from the priest. Already you have separated Narcissus from his pool. Words, words! Take your clothes off."

"Take-my-?"

"Yes, damn it! Hurry up! Rip off those rags and throw your ugly carcass on that table, so that I can see the extent of the curse which your hairy fiend Jehovah has inflicted on you!"

"Oh, no! I can't, I never can! Never, never!"

"Why not, idiot?"

"I should never have come here, I know that now. But I tried—I made a beautiful, high collar, a sort of ruff, and a sort of bustle to wear down below, you see, to take up the slack in the dress so that it wouldn't be so noticeable—and my hair flowing down over everything—but it wouldn't work, it just wouldn't!" Marguerite was in hysterics, wringing her hands and weeping.

"Drink this," the doctor said, handing her a glass of water into

which he had dropped a white powder. "It will help you to compose yourself. Now then, tell me a little more about this complaint of yours."

"Oh, sir, it isn't a complaint, it's a joy—that's what makes it so difficult."

"I see. Well, well. This problem, then. This hump or hunch or whatever you call it. When did you first notice it?"

"Not until people called my attention to it."

"And when was that?"

"It must have been when I was about eleven or twelve years old."

"I see. And what did your mother say?"

"She said it was my cross."

"Anything else?"

"Doctor," said Marguerite with dignity, laying her hand upon his pencil to prevent him from resuming his nail-cleaning, "I know you mean well, but there are certain things which I am bound never to reveal, and this is one of them. Let us get on with the cure, I beg of you."

"I realize," the doctor said, playing for time, "that families have their secrets, some of which are transmitted through the genes. However, every horror becomes fashionable sooner or later, somewhere in the world. For example, circumcision was secretly practiced in my family for at least three centuries because of a peculiar drapery with which the male children are born. It started, I believe, under the Ottoman Empire, when the heirs of my family were forced, because of these very draperies, to serve as decorations in the entourages of jaded pashas."

"My situation is not like that," Marguerite said—the drug was beginning to work, so that she sounded less sure of herself. "My mother said that I must never tell, that no one must ever see. She bound me by a terrible oath. Now do you understand?"

"Perfectly," said the doctor.

"But—" Marguerite looked down at her hands and squirmed under her burden, and in that uncertain light the hump seemed enormous, glowering, baleful—"she did not say that no one must ever feel it."

The doctor closed his eyes and shuddered at the thought of laying his hands on the malformation in pitch darkness. After a moment, fortified by a long drink from a bottle he kept hidden in his desk for just such emergencies, he opened the door to a large closet. "In there."

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HAIKU Alan watts Pale and resolute, the girl went into the closet with the doctor. In that confined space the sound of their breathing was terribly loud. It seemed to have an echo. Marguerite began to weep.

"Imagine that I am your mother," the doctor said gently, caressing her and running his hands over her. The coarse woollen dress came off over her head, the cotton chemise dropped to her feet. Marguerite stood naked and trembling while the doctor explored. In a way he was glad of the darkness now. If she could see his grimaces, she would hardly feel reassured! "I see," he croaked at length, rubbing his damp, icy hands on the seat of his trousers. "Well, well. A not uncommon condition after all. The only difference is in the manner of juncture. Generally siblings of your sort are joined either face to face or back to back. However, the ventral surface of the atrophied partner, in this instance, appears to be attached to the dorsal surface of the stronger, more perfect organism—if one may use such a phrase in connection with a case of incomplete individuation. I daresay you have not found your condition too inconvenient?"

"No, sir," said Marguerite. "On the contrary, it has had a strengthening effect upon me. I have never had a moment of loneliness in my life."

"You are a strong girl," the doctor conceded. "Well-shaped legs, splendid haunches—hold still, ninny, I'm merely palpating you. Do you think I'm like your salacious priest? Now, let me just get my hand in here between—"

"I advise you not to try that!"

"Why not? Good Lord, I have to find out the nature of the connecting tissue, to see if your guts are all mixed up together, or if it's just a flap of gristle and a few hairs."

"Be careful!" Marguerite warned him, flinching away. "She doesn't like that!"

"I'm not going to hurt either of you, damn it! Hold still!"

"Look out—I feel her moving! She only moves when she's going to bite!"

"She can't bite where I'm feeling. . . . Ugh!"

"Oh, doctor! Doctor!"

"I'll be all right. Now, you stay right here while I wash up a bit. Stand as still as possible. I'll just take a squint at the manual, and—" "Promise me that you won't hurt her!"



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"I promise," the doctor said, and he went out of the closet, leaving the door slightly ajar.

Marguerite listened for the sound of knives being sharpened, was reassured by the gurgling of a heavy liquid being poured out of a bottle. Peeping out, she saw the doctor heating a beaker over his bunsen burner. Suddenly he flung the door open and marched towards her, holding the beaker aloft. The miserable girl crouched in the corner, hiding her back from him.

"Now, now," the doctor said soothingly, "this isn't going to hurt much. It's nothing but castor oil which I have warmed slightly. Now stand up as straight as you can—out here, away from the wall."

Marguerite stood up as straight as she could, closed her eyes and opened her mouth wide, prepared to swallow the whole beakerful of castor oil. Instead she felt it emptied over her head. The warm oil flowed swiftly down over her body, coating her evenly from head to foot. At the same moment the doctor outrageously tickled the little sibling where she could not bite. Little sibling moved slightly—a fateful move! Oil flowed for the first time between the intimate twins. Little sibling tried to move back, found her ancient grip untenable, the comfortable indentations slippery with oil. Faster and faster she moved-oh, what a scrabbling and grabbing of tiny claws, what a clicking of impotent teeth! Little sibling had lost her grip! Down, down, down she slid, into the abvss of insecurity, fighting so ferociously that it seemed at times as if she would surely regain her throne. Almost she succeeded in hanging a tooth into a shapely buttock, where she might in time have consolidated a mediocre position. A force even more inexorable than her will pulled her towards the center of the earth. Down those lovely legs, without a bristle to cling to, she flailed like a tiny helicopter settling to rest, unable to generate quite enough power to rise up through the air again. A treacherous viscosity, bland as a legal seduction, came between the two sisters, parted them, sundered them, foiled the passionate adhesion of their two skins. Down, down down-plop!

The little sibling rocked uncertainly on her cowboy legs, panting, blinking slit-eyed up at the unscalable height. Then with a crafty expression on her face ("If not the Peacock Throne, then—"), she darted mother-naked out of the closet, into the office, clutched up a handful of old bandages and scuttled out of the building through a

large rat-hole which the doctor had been meaning to fix. They heard her clucking as she encountered the snow.

"Oh—oh! See what you've done\_" Marguerite shrieked hysterically, reaching as far as she could into the rat hole. It was with some difficulty that the doctor prevented her from bolting out into the snow in pursuit of the sibling.

"Don't worry," the doctor said. "She can take care of herself."

"No, she can't!"

"Here, towel yourself off with the rest of these bandages. What's good for the goose—"

"She knows nothing of taking care of herself!"

"You underestimate her. She is a keen observer of human nature. Drink this. Your problem will now be to keep from bending over backwards."

As Marguerite reached her house at the edge of town, she saw the sibling disappearing over a hill. The clever creature had wrapped those old bandages about herself so that she looked exactly like a jolly little nurse who had just got off work and was out for a roaring good time. She was skipping along hand in hand with Paris, the beautiful stranger.

"She will soon get tired," thought Marguerite, scrubbing off the symbols which the boys had chalked on her door as usual, but pausing for a moment over an especially interesting one. "She is really quite small. Perhaps he will let her ride piggy-back."

John Berry lives in Santa Monica, California. Krishna Fluting, a novel, won the first Macmillan Fiction Award in 1959; Macmillan will publish a collection of his short stories this year. He is working on the completion of a long work of verse and prose. John Berry is married to Ynez Johnson, an artist, and winner of a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1960-61. Her illustration for this story appears on page 148.



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